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THE GENIUS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

By Y. Y.

WERE Genius proved not to exist, we would fain invent it, if only to account for the unaccountable graces and capricious defects of the author of "Prince Otto." In an age which had the usage and the right of conferring literary titles, he would surely have passed as "the Ingenious Mr. Stevenson," and deeply as he is tinctured with the *fin du siècle*, I somehow cannot but picture him among those Oxford Academics of the seventeenth century, litterati, humanists, and omniscientists, who crystallised into the Royal Society. Most of them had as little affinity as he to the modern scientific mind; intellectual aristocrats, they preserved the dignity of a stately dilettantism in their most trivial as in their gravest speculations, whether measuring the orbs of space, or hunting Echo in back gardens, or projecting the Cyclopean cesspool at New College, so vast that it should never need emptying till the end of time. How thirsty their curiosity, how exigent their demands at the Oracle of Nature, how versatile their lucubrations! Yet had they little of the utilitarian philanthropy of their grandsons. Nay, not even for its own sake did they pursue knowledge, but rather as a mental luxury, a noble diversion and exercise for the mind of the "gentleman scholar and philosopher," such as were tennis, bowls, and the high horse for his body. It needed a soul as coarse as Swift's to flout their complacent toils, for if by the way these Olympians divagate into triviality, extravagance, and paradox, they are never ridiculous; their very absurdities we welcome as gracious condescension, for each wayward, futile, pompous page is glorified by a nimbus of exquisite amenity and impregnable self-respect.

Stevenson's work is to me a fascinating problem; I fall back on this comparison, far-fetched, perhaps, yet not wholly infructuous. It may have been suggested by his singular power of reproducing the diction of more eloquent days, but the parallel lies much deeper down. In those happy times Science was not yet divorced from Letters; the profoundest knowledge disdained not the embellishment of Style, which in turn lent its dignity to trifles.

The ingenious mind could flit securely from grave to gay, from majestic to minute, for all inconsistency of matter was harmonised by a suave regularity of manner; what to us would be but picturesque disorder it shrank from with the embarrassment of literary nakedness. This same scholarly instinct has, by I know not what channel, passed to Stevenson —the same fastidious nicety, the same unfailing charm of expression. As an essayist or a story-teller, who more versatile, more erratic than he, eluding our criticism as he glides from tragedy to farce, from mirth to meditation, like some storm-bird diving to the depths and anon skimming airily on the surface? Are then his works a mere dazzling kaleidoscope, and he after all but *Arlequin Auteur?* By no means; for what writer is more easy to single out even from his imitators? His work is indeed of a rare and peculiar unity; the same unmistakable personality pervades every page; and in his style we find the secret of this harmony. It may vary sometimes in character according to the exigencies of the subject, but never at all in its one persistent feature—its excellence, or (to use a bad word in a good sense) its superiority. Superior—that is, on a higher plane, of a finer quality than the language which does the everyday business of busy men. Superior—that is, aristocratically exclusive; and just as the ancient tongues which were the secret of priests and nobles were distrusted by the slaves, so nowadays superiority of style is an affront to mediocrity. You may call it affected; what you mean by affected depends on how much you know of the practice of the art. For myself I shall not readily believe that any beautiful yet concise expression of original consecutive thought was ever written *currente calamo.* With all the stimulus of listening senates or a breathless congregation, the orator can hardly rise to the unaffected nonchalance with which he is wont to pass the time o' day; how much less the author in his silent study. If affectation means sentimental insincerity, then is it nothing to our purpose; I have before now been asked to hand the butter with all the affectations of Della Crusca. If it means only artifice, the charge is a compliment. Mr. Stevenson's style is thoroughly artificial, because the work of a thorough artifex, as indeed is Rembrandt's painting. But the artifice lies not in a knack of fine periods, but in the self-control, the self-repression, the self-respect which keeps watch against slovenliness and vulgarity; his page is illuminated not so much by unvarying brilliance as by unvarying determination to express himself strongly

and sweetly. Too ready an eye for the ridiculous bars my claim to judge on so delicate a point of taste, but fairer critics have owned that sometimes he refines overmuch, and allows the sense to drift with the words. It may be so, but what of that? there is good store of bread to his oceans of sack. It is not here my purpose to analyse his art, but rather to point out how little it has of the modern air. Take two other prose-artists of our time, Ruskin and Matthew Arnold: each in his way is entirely modern; they simply took up our English such as they found it, perfecting it to their needs. Stevenson goes back not merely, as the critics fancy, to Sterne, but behind the Revolution to a period when scholars wrote for scholars and dreaded a solecism as a stain upon their honour, when the sonorous compliment and gracious urbanity of the cedar parlour were not cast aside on entering the library, when the reader was still "gentle" enough to relish the assiduous court and subtle flattery of a finely elaborated style. That he alone should have adopted this felicitous model I attribute to the accident of his birthplace. So long as Lowland Scotch survives, so long must English, as the aristocratic, the learned, the literary language, attract with the charm of Plato's Attic or Petrarch's Tuscan, and a Scotch student will seek out the purest English exemplars with a singleness of eye by us unattainable.

But the parallel is even stronger as regards his dilettantism, the other note in his attractive personality. At first you mistake it for Voltairian *diablerie*, then for Neo-Gallic heartlessness, then for agnostical weariness of the flesh. Is he ever sincere? does he care for anything or anybody? does he not despise his own puppets and gloat over their miseries? are his books mere sleight of hand, and is the showman sneering at us dull clowns agape on his benches? No, it is all pure dilettantism, and that of the high old English breed. With a certain polished reserve not wholly flattering to his rivals, he stands daintily aloof from the rabble who live by tickling the ears of the Public-Ass. True, he owes it to himself to make no discourteous allusions to the reader's ears, but in a graceful way he allows him to gather that their length has not wholly escaped his notice, nor does the honest fool like him less for his discrimination than for his reticence.

Were authors princes they might all write like this. Without being a prince, Mr. Stevenson somehow succeeds in evading the attitude of the labourer worthy of his hire. He does not profess to cast fine pearls before swine; he means them for

gentles and scholars ; but if the swine come grunting around, with a laugh he scrambles a few handfuls among them. He pleases just because he claims to write only to please himself and a few kindred spirits—not you or me. His dainties were not dressed for us, but for our betters : we like them none the less for that ; a few crumbs of the Empress Frederick's bride-cake fell by some chance to my childish maw—I pronounced them excellent. Again, even when most confidential and caressing, he allows no liberties ; he never hobnobs with the reader like Sterne ; when you are beginning to presume on his condescension, suddenly by a careless sarcasm or a courtly phrase he lets you know your place. When your curiosity is whetted by his own vivid interest in some topic, long before you tire of it he tosses it aside for something new. He suffers you to drain no cup to the dregs. You are to understand that he is no professional scribbler, but a lettered gentleman who just allows you a sight of his manuscripts. Granted that in these days such an attitude involves a certain illusion, still the art with which it is maintained is almost perfect. Stevenson alone—or at least most of all—among our finer writers has succeeded in veiling the nexus of contract between author and reader, book-writer and book-buyer, and in its place reviving the courteous, gracious, mutually-complaisant relations now well-nigh forgotten. Hence the humanising, if not precisely elevating, influence of his work. That work he seems to just carelessly leave in our way—not serious work, you understand—merely the pastime of a cultivated, leisurely mind. What scope, what license this artful dilettantism gives him ! To criticise almost seems an impertinence. We must not even speculate what he could do if he liked ; enough if we whisper that he has never yet chosen to do his utmost. Like those old experimentalists to whom I have compared him, he wades into deep waters, but no farther than he chooses ; he diverts himself by turns with philosophy, fiction, science, the black art and what not ; but nothing does he pursue in the sordid, technical, specialist spirit. Like them, too, his fancy is caught by chimeras and paradoxes on which he lavishes a world of elaboration. And why not ? a literary aristocrat surely knows how to preserve his dignity while toying with his pen. Superiority—distinction is the note which separates the dilettante from the vulgar trifler, and this distinction is as conspicuous in the audacious incompleteness of some of his work as in the consummate perfection of the rest. Quite apart from style, his attitude to his craft—

poorly as I have indicated it—revives a grateful reminiscence of the dilettantism of the Restoration.

If these things be so, to what shall we ascribe it but to pure Genius? Talent beats smoother the trodden ways; Genius alone strikes out a new path. Stevenson has already found imitators, but his only rivals are not of his own generation; they sleep on their marble shelves beneath quaint classic canopies. Not by copying their eccentricities, but by adapting their liberal spirit and scrupulous manipulation to his modern needs, has he woven round him the spell of a magic personality and renewed our affection for the mother tongue.

It was not this side glimpse, this rambling excursion that I sat down to write. But after all there has been—there will yet be—no lack of criticisms on his several works. Personally, though I retract much that of old I hastily objected, there remains still more than one issue which I would gladly join with Stevenson, nor should I shrink from retorting upon him the playful charge of "protervity" which he once brought against me. A few words as to his influence will be more to the purpose. Some miserable rivals—their names I dare not breathe—may be more popular, but strange to tell, he is popular too. While on the one hand I was surprised at the gravity with which Pattison commended to me Stevenson's early essays, I have been equally struck by the keen relish of working men, not merely for his stories themselves, but for his manner of narration. After all, music can be enjoyed without understanding it. Upon the brighter spirits of the younger generation his influence is steadily growing. In the case of several whose development I have watched, the usual phases of enthusiasm lead up through various modern writers to Stevenson. There for the present they pause to enlarge their knowledge of bygone masters, as though conscious that he indicates the high-water mark of contemporary prose. From him they are learning the secret of fastidious and scrupulous diction, of rapid and veracious narrative, of measured design and proportion—graces which have too long lain dormant among us. But after all he marks but a transition, not a culminating point. Nothing he has yet put forth in scope, amplitude, or import challenges the great masterpieces. Yet is his place among the masters. What though his aim be short of the highest, his achievement less than perfect, his example point to no ultimate goal? He stands apart supreme in his own magic circle, compelling his spectres and chanting

his spells. If we crowd round it is not to acclaim what is new-fangled and abnormal, but because we rightly prize Rarity, because the One is ever more to us than the Many, knowing as we do that in diversity of types lies the wealth of our literature as of our flora, and that every fresh literary form strikes light from yet another facet of the complex crystal of human mind. Whether the Magician will ever mellow into the Seer I cannot tell. All that he has yet done seems but of the nature of exercise and experiment—the capricious fluttering to and fro, the sportive circling of a swift-winged bird that purposes a flight high and far. But Genius knows best its own time to soar, and should time, health, and circumstance bar its rise, should he never pen another line, Robert Louis Stevenson—graceful and melodious singer, accomplished essayist, enthralling story-teller, inspirer of generous boys, cheering comrade of tired men, high priest of the arcana of our glorious tongue—with honour and without reproach will pass over to Treasure Island having deserved well of the Commonwealth of Letters.

1892. Y. Y.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON:

A REMINISCENCE

By Charles Lowe

CURIOUSLY enough, it was in what might be called an arena of abstract science that I first made the acquaintance of a young man who is now one of the most distinguished *littérateurs* of the age. On a sunny spring morning, now, alas! a score of years ago—sunny, though the huge stove was still roaring away in the corner with a rumbling sound like the rush of an express train through a tunnel—we were sitting in the mathematical class-room of the University of Edinburgh, awaiting the incoming of our dear old Professor (Kelland), I being then deep in the *Daily News* description of the German entry into Paris, when I felt a hand gently laid on my shoulder, and, turning round, beheld a young man with whose face I was quite familiar, though not yet cognisant of his name. Having always had a sharp and roving eye for varieties of type and

character among my fellow-students, this particular youth had already arrested my attention by the possession of exterior qualities which marked him off strongly from the rest of his comrades—a certain grace and refinement of manner and person not very common among the academic communities of Scotland, and withal a free and unconventional air with which a black velvet jacket and flowing flaxen locks were well matched. His whole appearance was much more indicative of the poet or the æsthete than of the scientist; and yet here was this attractive youth tapping my shoulder in one of the front benches of the mathematical class. Was not my name so and so, and was not I the fellow who had sent in a poem to the editors of the *University Magazine*, of whom, he added, he was one. His co-editor, who was sitting near him engaged in the perusal of a love sonnet instead of a treatise on logarithms, was another young man of equally fascinating exterior and charming manners—Walter Ferrier, son of a St. Andrew's professor and grandson of Christopher North—a young man of high aspirations and great promise too soon blasted by death; and nothing would content these *Arcades ambo* but that they should at once launch out into the literary career and try their 'prentice hand on a monthly venture entitled the *Edinburgh University Magazine*—a venture which did not last very long, and probably, indeed, received its death blow from the verses, monopolising about a third of one number, which the editors were indiscreet enough to accept from me and insert in their otherwise sparkling enough pages. It was a cantata, partly in the Lowland Scots' dialect, written in imitation of one of Burns's larger pieces; and, though I would give my worst enemy a very considerable *douceur* rather than that he should now rake this effusion up against me, I am at the same time pleased and proud to think that it was the means of bringing me into personal contact with Robert Louis Stevenson, for that was the name of the young man who had tapped me on the shoulder. Stevenson was, on the whole, well pleased with my poem, though he insisted on making certain editorial emendations, some of which, however, I am bound to say did more credit to the delicacy of his taste than to the accuracy of that sense of rhythm of which he subsequently became so great a master. From the mathematical classroom we hastened to repair to the privacy of a snug house of entertainment close by, called "The Pump," there to continue our discussion over Edinburgh ale and cold meat

pies; and I cannot remember that ever I spent a more pleasant or, indeed, a more inspiring, hour in Auld Reekie than the first one I thus passed with Robert Stevenson. From that single hour's conversation with the embryo author of "Treasure Island" I certainly derived more intellectual and personal stimulus than ever was imparted to me by any six months' course of lectures within the walls of "good King James's College." He was so perfectly frank and ingenuous, so ebullient and open-hearted, so sunny, so sparkling, so confiding, so vaulting in his literary ambitions, and withal so widely read and well informed—notwithstanding his youth, for he could scarcely have been out of his teens then—that I could not help saying to myself that here was a young man who had commended himself more to my approval and emulation than any other of my fellow-students. His friends, I gathered from him, were fain that he should qualify himself for the career of an engineer, in imitation of some other members of his family; but it was perfectly clear to me, privately, that his friends had chosen the wrong profession for him, and I rather think I jocosely remarked to him at the time that if ever he built a bridge or constructed a lighthouse, I would at once forego my claims to be a fairly good judge of capacity and character. His conversation in itself certainly impressed me with the fact that literature was his future *métier*, and this conviction was deepened by a perusal of some of the articles which he wrote for his *University Magazine*. One of these, on "The Philosophy of Nomenclature," was an amplification of a reflection from Tristram Shandy (and how enviably familiar, too, he seemed to be with all the novelists of the last century!): "How many Cæsars and Pompeys, by mere inspiration of their names, have been rendered worthy of them! And how many are there who might have done exceedingly well in the world had not their characters and spirits been totally depressed and Nicodemus'd into nothing"; and though the paper was not signed, yet its authorship stood revealed by the avowal: "As a schoolboy, I remember the pride with which I hailed Robin Hood, Robert Bruce, and Robert le Diable as my *name fellows*." I have made particular reference to this juvenile effusion, which betrayed the making of the future stylist and story-teller, as, in turning over a volume of his essays the other day ("Virginibus Puerisque"), I found him, in his charming paper on "The English Admirals," harping on the same favourite chord, as thus: "Men of high destinies have high-sounding names.

Pym and Habakkuk may do pretty well, but they must not think to cope with the Cromwells and Isaiahs. And you could not find a better case in point than that of the English Admirals."

Young Stevenson devoted much more of his time to the fortunes of his *Magazine* than to the attainment of merit-marks in his lecture-rooms, where, indeed, his appearance was less the rule than its exception. He had a supreme contempt for plodding and prize-taking, of which he writes in his "Apology for Idleness": "They have been to school or college, but all the time they have had their eye on the medal." Stevenson himself never had his eye on the medal. He scorned the medal, and another sentence in the same essay is a pure bit of personal autobiography, as far as his academic career was concerned: "Extreme busyness," he writes, "whether at school or college, kirk or market, indicates a system of deficient vitality; while a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity." Stevenson, I say, despised the medal; he was none of your examination crammers and competition wallahs; but, on the other hand, he was as omnivorous a general reader—if chiefly, perchance, in the lighter pastures of literature—as was young Teufelsdröckh in the university library of Weissnichtswo; and he has already reaped his reward for having thus followed the bent of his own tastes in spite of the spirit and formulas of his time. The fame to which he has attained has not at all surprised me; but I cannot help observing that there is one element in his literary workmanship which has always been a puzzle to me, and that is his perfect mastery of Lowland Scotch as this language was spoken, among others, by David Balfour, of Shaws, and Alan Breck Stewart. As a spoken tongue, the language of Burns is fast falling into disuse, especially in the urban and more educated communities of Scotland; nor among the gentry and upper middle classes would you now find many, if any, who could hold their own in a Doric dialogue with an Angus or a Lothian peasant, as this could have been done, for example, by Walter Scott, to whom the speech of Allan Ramsay was the vernacular of his father's fireside. Nothing in the talk, accent, or manner of Stevenson suggested that his education had been anything but purely English, or that he was not a child of the new time in Scotland, with all its Anglicising and obliterating tendencies. And yet I am sure that the Wizard of the North himself never handled the "braid Scotch" with more purity and

skill than has been done by the delineator of the "Master of Ballantrae"—a fact which must add another bright ray to that lustrous star of his fame, of which I have watched the course with a special interest and admiration ever since it began to show above the lofty, rugged outlines of Arthur's Seat, until it assumed the appearance of a fixed position in the firmament above a solitary and sunlit isle in the far-off Pacific sea.

1891.

BOOKS WHICH INFLUENCED ME

By Robert Louis Stevenson

[Note.—*This was contributed as one of a series of articles that appeared in the "British Weekly" in* 1887.]

THE editor has somewhat insidiously laid a trap for his correspondents, the question put appearing at first so innocent, truly cutting so deep. It is not, indeed, until after some reconnaisance and review that the writer awakens to find himself engaged upon something in the nature of autobiography; or, perhaps worse, upon a chapter in the life of that little, beautiful brother whom we once all had, and whom we have all lost and mourned: the man we ought to have been, the man we hoped to be. But when word has been passed (even to an editor) it should, if possible, be kept; and if sometimes I am wise and say too little, and sometimes weak and say too much, the blame must lie at the door of the person who entrapped me.

The most influential books, and the truest in their influence, are works of fiction. They do not pin the reader to a dogma which he must afterwards discover to be inexact; they do not teach him a lesson which he must afterwards unlearn. They repeat, they re-arrange, they clarify the lessons of life; they disengage us from ourselves, they constrain us to the acquaintance of others; and they show us the web of experience, not as we can see it for ourselves, but with a singular change—that monstrous, consuming ego of ours being, for

the nonce, struck out. To be so, they must be reasonably true to the human comedy; and any work that is so serves the turn of instruction. But the course of our education is answered best by those poems and romances where we breathe a magnanimous atmosphere of thought and meet generous and pious characters. Shakespeare has served me best. Few living friends have had upon me an influence so strong for good as Hamlet or Rosalind. The last character, already well beloved in the reading, I had the good fortune to see, I must think in an impressionable hour, played by Mrs. Scott Siddons. Nothing has ever more moved, more delighted, more refreshed me; nor has the influence quite passed away. Kent's brief speech over the dying Lear had a great effect upon my mind, and was the burthen of my reflections for long: so profoundly, so touchingly generous did it appear in sense, so overpowering in expression. Perhaps my dearest and best friend outside of Shakespeare is d'Artagnan—the elderly d'Artagnan of the "Vicomte de Bragelonne." I know not a more human soul, nor, in any way, a finer; I shall be very sorry for the man who is so much of a pedant in morals that he cannot learn from the Captain of Musketeers. Lastly, I must name the "Pilgrim's Progress": a book that breathes of every beautiful and valuable emotion.

But of works of art little can be said; their influence is profound and silent, like the influence of nature; they mould by contact; we drink them up like water, and are bettered, yet know not how. It is in books more specifically didactic that we can follow out the effect, and distinguish and weigh and compare. A book which has been very influential upon me fell early into my hands, and so may stand first; though I think its influence was only sensible later on, and perhaps still keeps growing, for it is a book not easily outlived: the "Essais" of Montaigne. That temperate and genial picture of life is a great gift to place in the hands of persons of to-day; they will find in these smiling pages a magazine of heroism and wisdom, all of an antique strain; they will have their "linen decencies" and excited orthodoxies fluttered, and will (if they have any gift of reading) perceive that these have not been fluttered without some excuse and ground of reason; and (again if they have any gift of reading) they will end by seeing that this old gentleman was in a dozen ways a finer fellow, and held in a dozen ways a nobler view of life, than they or their contemporaries.

The next book, in order of time, to influence me was the

New Testament, and in particular the Gospel according to St. Matthew. I believe it would startle and move anyone, if they could make a certain effort of imagination and read it freshly like a book, not droningly and dully like a portion of the Bible. Anyone would then be able to see in it those truths which we are all courteously supposed to know and all modestly refrain from applying. But upon this subject it is perhaps better to be silent.

I come next to Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," a book of singular service, a book which tumbled the world upside down for me, blew into space a thousand cobwebs of genteel and ethical illusion; and, having thus shaken my tabernacle of lies, set me back again upon a strong foundation of all the original and manly virtues. But it is, once more, only a book for those who have the gift of reading. I will be very frank —I believe it is so with all good books, except, perhaps, fiction. The average man lives, and must live, so wholly in convention, that gunpowder charges of the truth are more apt to discompose than to invigorate his creed. Either he cries out upon blasphemy and indecency, and crouches the closer around that little idol of part-truths and part-conveniences which is the contemporary deity, or he is convinced by what is new, forgets what is old, and becomes truly blasphemous and indecent himself. New truth is only useful to supplement the old; rough truth is only wanted to expand, not to destroy, our civil and often elegant conventions. He who cannot judge had better stick to fiction and the daily papers. There he will get little harm, and, in the first at least, some good.

Close upon the back of my discovery of Whitman, I came under the influence of Herbert Spencer. No more persuasive rabbi exists, and few better. How much of his vast structure will bear the touch of Time, how much is clay and how much brass, it were too curious to inquire. But his words, if dry, are always manly and honest; there dwells in his pages a spirit of highly abstract joy, plucked naked, like an algebraic symbol, but still joyful; and the reader will find there a *caput-mortuum* of piety, with little indeed of its loveliness, but with most of its essentials; and these two qualities make him a wholesome, as his intellectual vigour makes him a bracing, writer. I should be much of a hound if I lost my gratitude to Herbert Spencer.

"Goethe's Life" by Lewes, had a great importance for me when it first fell into my hands—a strange instance of the partiality of man's good and man's evil. I know no one

whom I less admire than Goethe; he seems a very epitome of the sins of genius; breaking open the doors of private life, and wantonly wounding friends, in the crowning offence of "Werther"; and in his own character, a mere pen and ink Napoleon, conscious of the rights and duties of superior talents as a Spanish inquisitor was conscious of the rights and duties of his office. And yet in his fine devotion to his art, in his honest and serviceable friendship for Schiller, what lessons are contained. Biography, usually so false to its office, does here for once perform for us some of the work of fiction, reminding us, that is, of the truly mingled tissue of man's nature, and how huge faults and shining virtues cohabit and persevere in the same character. History serves us well to this effect; but in the originals, not in the pages of the popular epitomiser, who is bound, by the very nature of his task, to make us feel the difference of epochs instead of the essential identity of man; and even in the originals, only to those who can recognise their own human virtues and defects in strange forms, often inverted and under strange names, often interchanged. Martial is a poet of no good repute, and it gives a man new thoughts to read his works dispassionately, and find in this unseemly jester's serious passages the image of a kind, wise, and self-respecting gentleman. It is customary, I suppose, in reading Martial, to leave out these pleasant verses; I never heard of them, at least, until I found them for myself; and this partiality is one among a thousand things that help to build up our distorted and hysterical conception of the great Roman Empire.

This brings us by a natural transition to a very noble book—the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius. The dispassionate gravity, the noble forgetfulness of self, the tenderness of others, that are there expressed, and were practised on so great a scale in the life of its writer, make this book a book quite by itself. No one can read it and not be moved. Yet it scarcely or rarely appeals to the feelings—those very mobile, those not very trusty parts of man. Its address lies farther back, its lesson comes more deeply home; when you have read, you carry away with you a memory of the man himself; it is as though you had touched a loyal hand, looked into brave eyes, and made a noble friend; there is another bond on you thenceforward, binding you to life and to the love of virtue.

Wordsworth should perhaps come next. Every one has been influenced by Wordsworth, and it is hard to tell

precisely how. A certain innocence, a rugged austerity of joy, a sight of the stars, "the silence that there is among the hills," something of the cold thrill of dawn, cling to his work and give it a particular address to what is best in us. I do not know that you learn a lesson; you need not—Mill did not—agree with any one of his beliefs; and yet the spell is cast. Such are the best teachers: (a dogma learned is only a new error—the old one was perhaps as good; but a spirit communicated is a perpetual possession.) These best teachers climb beyond teaching to the place of art; it is themselves, and what is best in themselves, that they communicate.

I should never forgive myself if I forgot "The Egoist." It is art if you like, but it belongs purely to didactic art; and from all the novels I have read (and I have read thousands) stands in a place by itself. Here is a Nathan for the modern David; here is a book to send the blood into men's faces. Satire, the angry picture of human faults, is not great art; we can all be angry with our neighbour; what we want is to be shown not his defects, of which we are too conscious, but his merits, to which we are too blind. And "The Egoist" is a satire; so much must be allowed; but it is a satire of a singular quality, which tells you nothing of that obvious mote, which is engaged from first to last with that invisible beam. It is yourself that is hunted down, these are your own faults that are dragged into the day and numbered, with lingering relish, with cruel cunning and precision. A young friend of Mr. Meredith's (as I have the story) came to him in an agony: "This is too bad of you," he cried. "Willoughby is me." "No, my dear fellow," said the author, "he is all of us." I have read "The Egoist" five or six times myself, and I mean to read it again; for I am like the young friend of the anecdote—I think Willoughby an unmanly but a very serviceable exposure of myself.

I suppose, when I am done, I shall find that I have forgotten much that was most influential, as I see already I have forgotten Thoreau, and Hazlitt, whose paper "On the Spirit of Obligations" was a turning point in my life, and Penn, whose little book of aphorisms had a brief but strong effect on me, and Mitford's "Tales of Old Japan," wherein I learned for the first time the proper attitude of any rational man to his country's laws—a secret found, and kept, in the Asiatic Islands. That I should commemorate all, is more than I can hope or the editor could ask. It will be more to the point, after having said so much upon improving books,

to say a word or two about the improvable reader. The gift of reading, as I have called it, is not very common, nor very generally understood. It consists, first of all, in a vast intellectual endowment—a free grace, I find I must call it—by which a man rises to understand that he is not punctually right, nor those from whom he differs absolutely wrong. He may hold dogmas ; he may hold them passionately ; and he may know that others hold them but coldly, or hold them differently, or hold them not at all. Well, if he has the gift of reading, these others will be full of meat for him. They will see the other side of propositions and the other side of virtues. He need not change his dogma for that, but he may change his reading of that dogma, and he must supplement and correct his deductions from it. A human truth, which is always very much a lie, hides as much of life as it displays. It is men who hold another truth, or, as it seems to us, perhaps, a dangerous lie, who can extend our restricted field of knowledge, and rouse our drowsy consciences. Something that seems quite new, or that seems insolently false or very dangerous, is the test of a reader. If he tries to see what it means, what truth excuses it, he has the gift, and let him read. If he is merely hurt, or offended, or exclaims upon his author's folly, he had better take to the daily papers ; he will never be a reader.

And here, with the aptest illustrative force, after I have laid down my part-truth, I must step in with its opposite. For, after all, we are vessels of a very limited content. Not all men can read all books ; it is only in a chosen few that any man will find his appointed food ; and the fittest lessons are the most palatable, and make themselves welcome to the mind. A writer learns this early ; and it is his chief support ; he goes on unafraid, laying down the law ; and he is sure at heart that most of what he says is demonstrably false, and much of a mingled strain, and some hurtful, and very little good for service ; but he is sure besides that when his words fall into the hands of any genuine reader, they will be weighed and winnowed, and only that which suits will be assimilated ; and when they fall into the hands of one who cannot intelligently read, they come there quite silent and inarticulate, falling upon deaf ears, and his secret is kept as if he had not written.

STEVENSON'S TWO MOTHERS

By Eve Blantyre Simpson

LOUIS STEVENSON, in one of his chance autobiographic glimpses, tells us how he came to accompany his father on an inspection of the harbour lights of Fife. "It was," he says, "my first professional tour, my first journey in the complete character of man *without the help of petticoats.*" A great influence had these petticoats in bending his thoughts aright, when he was but a green twig. Their patience, their cheerfulness, flooded the dawn of his life with sunshine, and the very remembrance of these palmy days filled him with joyousness, for, as Sydney Smith says, "If you make children happy, you will make them happy twenty years hence by the memory of it." He was a lucky-starred boy. Fortune had gifted him with two sterling mothers, for the nurse to whom he so touchingly dedicated his "Garden of Verses" held a place in his affections only second to one. Along with Mrs. Stevenson, this mother of his adoption, Alison Cunningham, tended him with a care to which he owed his life. His nurse is now the only one of the petticoated angels of his infant life left.* Mrs. Stevenson, in May, 1897, was laid beside her husband under the good Scots sods their son had longed to rest below. She had not dreamed she would have wept the eyes that should have wept for her, and had, when left a widow, transplanted herself and the endeared belongings of her married home to Samoa. When, her son died she returned to the Old World for one tie she had left there—her elder sister (the Auntie† of Louis' Verses), who had always been a centre in her family. This Miss Balfour had mothered Mrs. Stevenson in her school days, and now the later generation of orphans she had reared being started in life, she needed her younger sister to be eyes and ears to her, when sight and hearing were failing. Glad were Mrs. Stevenson's old friends when she re-settled in Edinburgh with this senior sister, in a house overlooking river and sea, with

* She died July, 1913.

† "Chief of our Aunts—not only I,
But all your dozen nurslings cry,
What did the other children do,
And what were childhood wanting you?"

one of those unique views which only a city built as Auld Reekie is, can command.

Mrs. Stevenson courageously faced her sorrow. She remained as of yore, bright and calm. Her son, I heard, when a grown man, recall how proud he was of her clear-cut features, her gracious manner when he went, under her wing, to children's parties. He boasted no child at these entertainments had so pretty a mother as he. Hers was a perennial beauty. With her cultured mind, her goodly presence, strangers who latterly met her would not credit she was nearing threescore and ten. The son who had gone before her was the theme she loved to hear others discourse on. Her unceasing interest in everything connected with him, her every thought given so wholly to him, made her listeners realise how great was her loss, how great was her love. She, so "austerely led," had never been otherwise than "well content." When people marvelled at her vivacity, she bravely replied she had surely had small cause to repine with a happy record of married life to dwell on, and forty-five years of her son's companionship granted to her. If her Louis had remained unknown to fame, to hear her speak of him would have drawn about her pleased listeners, for she told with such a spice of wit and graphicness, reminiscences of him, they fastened on the hearer's memory.

Alison Cunningham came to share with her the care of Louis when he was eighteen months old, and for stark love and kindness she too would have followed him into far countries. "Cummy," as her small charge promptly christened her, hailed from Torryburn, a village of white crowstepped houses, which lies facing the sun on the edge of the Forth. Her people had belonged for generations to this west neuk of Fife, and she had endless tales to tell of its local legendry and historic lore. She knew gruesome facts of resurrectionists who lifted from Torryburn's graveyard and its neighbour, Culross Abbey. Her collection of stories were doubtless a mine of wealth to young R. L. S., for, like her mistress, Cummy had the gift of picturing in words. She had had the advantage of a sound education, for to finish her schooling she went daily to Dunfermline five miles away. This distance she proudly records she covered in a marvellously short time, for Louis's "Comely Cummy," as he called her, along with her refined features, is still trig and active. When she went back for her holidays to red-roofed Torryburn she received and preserved many letters from her charge. Mrs.

Stevenson wrote these early epistles to little Loo's dictation. They are full of childish reiterations, hopes that his Cummy will come back soon, and questions as to the people in her old world village she had made him acquainted with by her descriptions. He informs her, " Catherine sleeps in my room because *Papa said it*," and that Papa said it, has an authoritative brevity which even His Majesty Louis the Worshipped did not gainsay. At the end of one letter he signs himself " Your loving Robert Louis Stevenson," but fearing this full and then seldom used title sounded stiff and estranged, he ordered his mother between the " loving " and his baptismal name to insert " little son," knowing that these two short words would act as a magnet on Cummy, and insure her return, despite the attractions of that El Dorado he longed to visit—Torryburn. Cummy tells how, when ailing, he would, after tossing sleepless, desire to hear comforting words from Scripture read, to be a rod and staff to him in the darksome, terror-haunted vale of night. Willingly good Cummy complied with his wish, and read till she saw through her " kind voice " he had found rest. In the morning, when he awoke refreshed, and the sun shone into his room, he again issued his constant command, " Read to me, Cummy." His nurse, knowing well his fears with the shadows of night had flown away, and the " Old, Old Story " would be laid aside till he again traversed the " uneven land," with well-pretended ignorance would ask, " What chapter will I read to you, my laddie ? " But her laddie no longer a saint would be, and with the unhypocritical honesty of childhood replied, " Why, Cummy, it's daylight now ; put away the Bible and reach over for that new book of Ballantyne's." Early on him came the desire to write. Cummy depicts how he often slipped his hand into hers when he was a petticoated boy of three and four, and dragged her off to the nursery, signalled to her to lock the door, and putting his finger to his lips to enjoin secrecy, whispered as loud as a stage conspirator, " I've got a story to tell, Cummy ; you write it." " He just havered," says Cummy, smiling yet at the recollection of her little lad, whose keen eyes glowed all the darker then in contrast with the childish yellow hair which crowned his head. Cummy entered heartily into the mystery and conspiracy of the secretive tale-maker. His women-folk were always slavishly good-humoured to their young autocrat, doing his whimsical bidding, when practicable, without hesitation. " I wrote down every word he spoke," says Cummy, " it pleased the

bairn, and I read his havers to his mother at the nursery fire." When others spoke of him as the masterly master of his pen, the petticoated guardians of his youth still loved to speak of him as Smout—his father's name for him. They pictured him hiding in the manse garden at Colinton, while they, the seekers, wandered about pretending they could not see the girlishly-dressed boy in blue so obviously hidden. Not only "the little feet along the floor" did the mother often chance to hear in after years, but also his piping voice, asking in the childish refrain, "How far is it to Babylon?" as he and his cousins sang by the water door, wondering if they would reach that distant city "by candle light." Cummy kept a journal in these days, in which she registered small Smoutie's first words, his pretty sayings, his precocious chatter, his fertile make-believes. Thinking she was nigh unto death once, she burned this chronicle. "I mind every word he said to me," she says, "and when his mamma and I looked at the photographs of him in the frocks I made for him, we seemed to see him playing about again so happy like." Their minds were so filled with him they never quite realised his own words:

> "For long ago the truth to say,
> He has grown up and gone away,
> And it is but a child of air
> That lingers in the garden there."

"On my tomb, if ever I have one, I mean to get these words inscribed, 'He clung to his paddle,'" Louis said in his first book, "The Inland Voyage." In this watery journey the *Arethusa* had born him gallantly down the Oise, till it rushed below a fallen tree, and then the canoe absconding, like Absalom's steed, left her skipper entangled in the branches. "Death himself had me by the heels," he wrote, "for this was his last ambuscade, and he must now personally join in the fray. And *still I clung to my paddle.*" The paddle with which he plied his course in life, and steered therewith into our hearts was in reality his pen. He clung to it despite adverse currents, and moreover wielded it with a boyish gaiety of spirit which showed his heroic pluck. "Gladly I lived," he truly sang. His contented, happy temperament he owed in a great measure to the help of the petticoats who shielded his youthful years. They never willingly thwarted or out of laziness refused any reasonable request of the delicate boy they cherished. They petted him without spoiling him. They taught him despite the many months his feeble health

held him captive in the house, *to see*, for as Ruskin says, "Thousands can think for one who can see; to see clearly is poetry, prophecy, religion, all in one:"

> "The world is so full of a number of things
> I am sure we should all be happy as kings."

he wrote in after life, which was a sentiment he learned when he was a light-hearted ruler of the nursery realm, cheerful if autocratic.

These two fervent smiths who forged this bright sword* of literature had good metal wherewith to fashion their blade and they knew it, for they proudly dreamed of a brilliant future for their little Loo even when he dictated havers to Cummy. He put up a door-plate on 17, Heriot Row, with "R. L. Stevenson, Advocate," thereon, and they knew his deed box in the Parliament House was guiltless of briefs, and everyone thought he was a born idler, or as he himself said, "base," not to follow the profession of his fathers. They believed he would yet shine. Instead of dry legal pages he was these years preparing to bring into life David Balfour, to resurrect Lord Braxfield as Weir of Hermiston, and brighten our shelves with "Memories and Portraits." His first essays in print, "The Charity Bazaar," "The Pentland Rising," and a few papers in the *Edinburgh University Magazine* (now all so valued by the bibliomaniac) were often read and praised by his first amanuenses and critics. His mother with keen maternal insight early guessed wherein his genius lay, guessed what would be his ablest weapon, and fostered his inclination to hold by the pen as he held by the truant *Arethusa's* paddle. In his Table Talk Shirley bears this out. "It was from this cottage (Swanston) that possibly the most charming of our younger Scottish writers went out into the world to try his luck. Hardly anyone except his mother guessed as yet what was in store. But she was prescient as mothers are."

"Be good yourself—make others happy," Mrs. Stevenson wrote as a motto on a quilt after her signature. "That," she added, as she finished the "happy," "is the Gospel

* "So like a sword the son shall roam
On nobler missions sent;
And as the smith remained at home
In peaceful turret pent,
So sits the while the mother well content."
——"Underwoods," by R.L.S.

according to R. L. Stevenson." It was a gospel she preached by precept and example, and she took pains to impress it on her little son, so when he grew "well and old," it tided him over many of the ills of life.

Of his "second mother, my first wife," as he called his faithful Alison Cunningham, bereft of her boy and of her mistress, who so generously let her share her only child with her, the mistress who grew into Cummy's best friend, she was left as she with hopefulness said, "not for long," Mrs. Stevenson on her last visit to Cummy's snug home noted the crape still on her dress which she had donned when the fell news came from Samoa. "Don't take it off, Cummy," she said, as she touched this trapping of woe. She well knew Cummy's mourning was not only an outward sign of grief. These two angels "of his infant life," overcoming their national Scots reserve, had for his sake proudly worn their hearts upon their sleeves, so he who ran might read engraven thereon his first mother's last word on earth—"Louis."

1897.

R. L. S.

AN EARLY PORTRAIT

By Edmund Gosse

BUT one was there, the stripling of our crew,
Cynthius by name, a tall and nimble wight,
Most indiscreet he was, though kind and true ;
In strange adventures both by day and night
This restless being took his sole delight ;
And oft we quaked to mark his aspect sly,
As hand on hip, deep in the evening light,
He taught those townsfolk, with an earnest eye,
Of things that never were in earth or sea or sky.

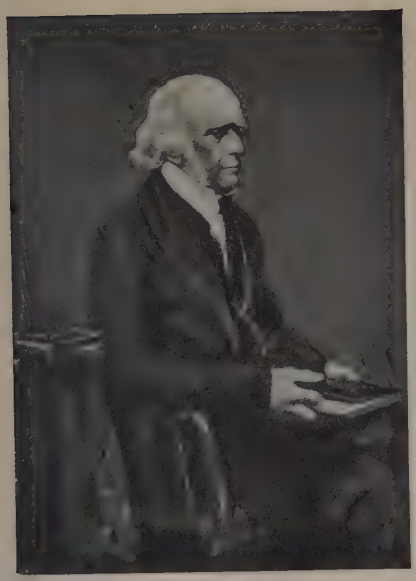
Little he loved the quiet Dorian ways,
To plastic beauty he was somewhat blind ;
The luscious stillness of those blissful days
Hung like a cloud upon his cheerful mind,
Nor pleasure in processions could he find ;
Nor blew the flute, nor plucked the lyre-string tense,
No fillet round his temples would he bind,
But lashed the poets for their lack of sense,
And rated with his tongue the athlete's indolence.

Yet was he, for all this, the chief delight
Of racer, bard, artificer and sage,
Who clustered round their captious favourite,
And smiled to hear the youthful stoic wage
Fantastic war against a nobler age ;
But we, who knew him best, shuddered to see,
Like some fierce creature in a feeble cage,
His twinkling eye, grown restive, long to be
Alert on some new scheme of daring devilry.

From "The Island of the Blest.
"Firdausi in Exile and Other Poems.
By Edmund Gosse (Heinemann).

From "Edinburgh," by Robert Louis Stevenson. Illustrated in colour by James Heron. (Seeley, Service and Co.)

JOHN KNOX'S HOUSE, HIGH STREET. EDINBURGH.



THE REV. LOUIS BALFOUR,
STEVENSON'S GRANDFATHER

ROBERT STEVENSON,
STEVENSON'S GRANDFATHER.

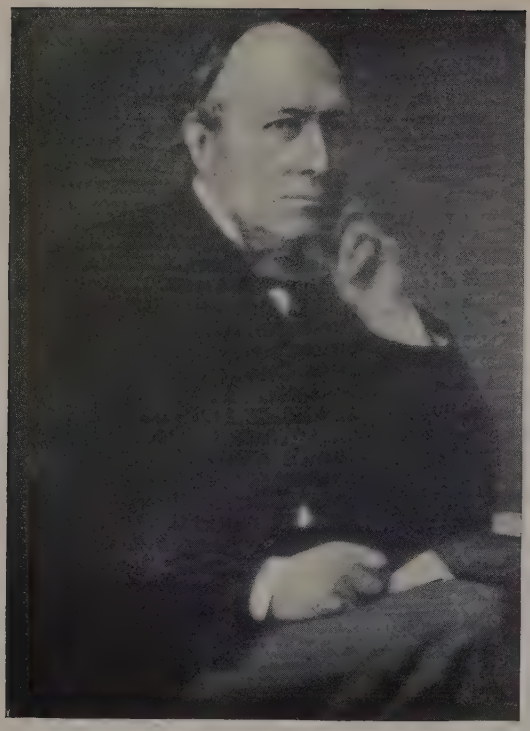


Photo by John Moffatt, Edinburgh.
From "Stevenson's Works." Pentland Edition. (Cassell.)

THOMAS STEVENSON,
THE FATHER OF R. L. S.

"His entire life was devoted to the unremitting pursuit of a scientific profession . . . yet it was from him that Louis derived all the romantic and artistic elements that drew him away from engineering."—Graham Balfour's "Life of Stevenson." (Methuen.)

From "Stevenson's Works." Pentland Edition. (Cassell.)

MRS. STEVENSON, THE MOTHER OF R. L. S.

"When he was small she read to him a great deal, and to her he owed his first acquaintance with much that is best in literature."—Graham Balfour's "Life of Stevenson." (Methuen.)

Photo by J. Patrick, Edinburgh.

R. L. S. AND HIS FATHER.

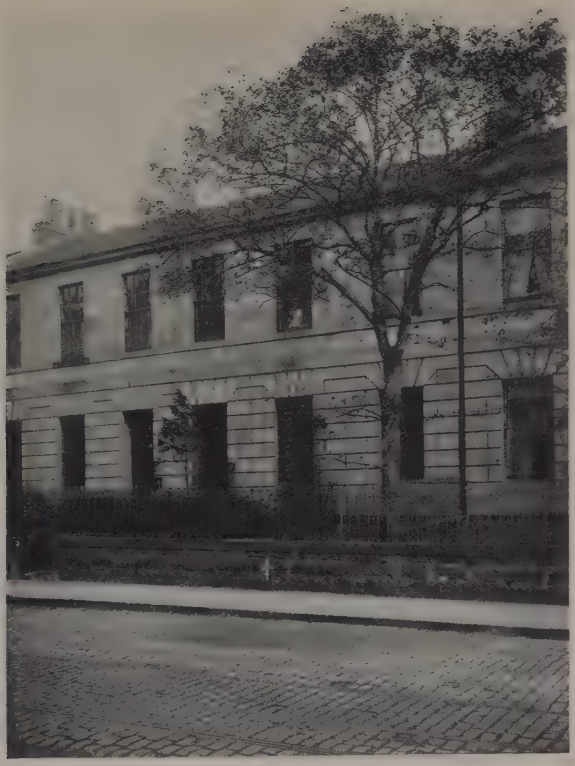


Photo by J. Patrick, Edinburgh.

No. 8, HOWARD PLACE, EDINBURGH. HERE STEVENSON WAS BORN ON NOVEMBER 13th, 1850.

"BABY TO BAR."

A series of twelve Portraits, kindly lent by Mrs. M. C. Balfour.

From "The Works of R. L. Stevenson." (Pentland Edition.)
By permission of Messrs. Cassell & Co.

From "R. L. Stevenson's Edinburgh Days."
By Eve Blantyre Simpson. (Hodder & Stoughton.)

EDINBURGH ACADEMY,
HENDERSON ROW, EDINBURGH.

"In 1861 he was transferred to the Edinburgh Academy, then, as now, the leading School of Edinburgh."—Graham Balfour's "Life of Stevenson." (Methuen.)

From "R. L. Stevenson's Edinburgh Days."
By Eve Blantyre Simpson.

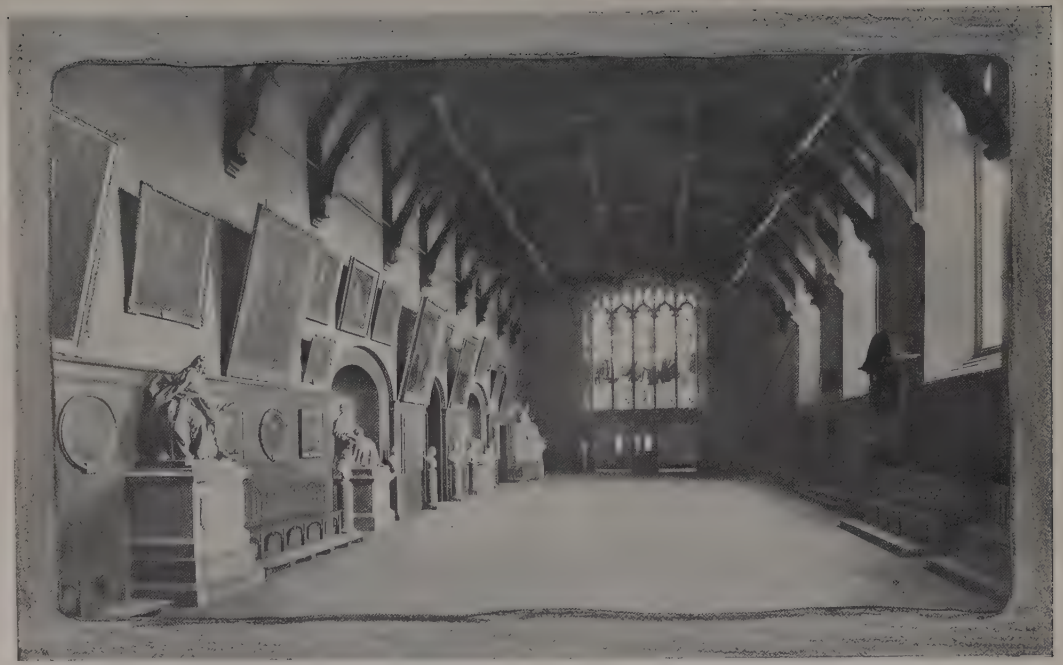
R. L. S.

"A man of twenty-two, his smooth face, the more girlish by reason of his long hair, was Bertie . . he looked nothing less than English except Scotch."—Andrew Lang.

From "R. L. Stevenson's Edinburgh Days."
By Eve Blantyre Simpson.

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY.

Where, "I plume myself that no one ever played the truant with more deliberate care.'



PARLIAMENT HALL, EDINBURGH, 1875.

From "R. L. Stevenson's Edinburgh Days."
By Eve Blantyre Simpson.

"On July 14th, 1875, he successfully passed his Final Examination, and two days after was called to the Scottish Bar."—Graham Balfour's "Life of Stevenson." (Methuen.)

From "R. L. Stevenson's Edinburgh Days."
By E. B. Simpson.

THE PENTLAND HILLS ABOVE SWANSTON.

"Be it granted me to behold you again, in dying, Hills of Home."

EDINBURGH, FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL.

From "R. L. Stevenson's Edinburgh Days."
By E. B. Simpson.

"Thus, the plan of the city and her suburbs is mapped out upon the grounds of blackness, as when a child pricks a drawing full of pinholes and exposes it before a candle."

Photo by J. Patrick, Edinburgh

R. L. S.'S AUNT.

The "Chief of our Aunts," of "A Child's Garden of Verses." See page 26.

SWANSTON COTTAGE, THE EARLY HOME OF STEVENSON.

His father took a lease of the house in 1867.

From "R. L. Stevenson's Edinburgh Days."
By E. B. Simpson.

THE CASTLE, EDINBURGH.

"And while you are looking, across upon the Castle Hill, the drums and bugles begin to recall the scattered garrison; the air thrills with the sound; the bugles sing aloud, and the last rising flourish mounts and melts into the darkness like a star: a martial swansong, fitly rounding in the labours of the day."

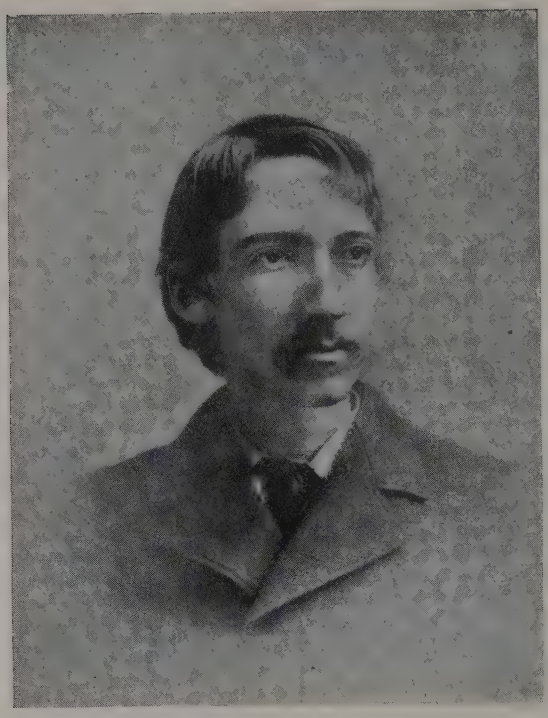
From "R. L. Stevenson's Edinburgh Days."
By Eve Blantyre Simpson. (Hodder & Stoughton.)

ALISON CUNNINGHAM
(Stevenson's Nurse "Cummy").

"My second mother, my first wife,
The angel of my infant life—
From the sick child, now well and old,
Take, nurse, the little book you hold!"

Dedication of "A Child's Garden of Verses":

"To Alison Cunningham. From her Boy."



"Thin-legged, thin-chested, slight unspeakably,
Neat-footed and weak-fingered; in his face—
Lean, large boned, curved of beak, and touched with race,
Bold-lipped, rich-tinted, mutable as the sea,
The brown eyes radiant with vivacity—
There shines a brilliant and romantic grace,
A spirit intense and rare, with trace on trace
Of passion and impudence and energy. . . ."

W. E. HENLEY. "In Hospital."
From "Poems" by William Ernest Henley.
(Nutt.)

From a Portrait, in the possession of Mr. Edmund Gosse, taken in California.

R. L. STEVENSON.

From "Letters from Samoa," by Mrs. M. I. Stevenson.
By permission of Messrs. Methuen.

MRS. M. I. STEVENSON
(Stevenson's Mother) in 1848.

Photo by J. Patrick, Edinburgh.

17, HERIOT ROW, EDINBURGH.

"In January, 1853, Stevenson's parents moved to 1, Inverleith Terrace, and in May, 1857, to 17, Heriot Row, which continued to be their Edinburgh home until the death of Thomas Stevenson in 1887."

"The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

Photo by J. Patrick, Edinburgh.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

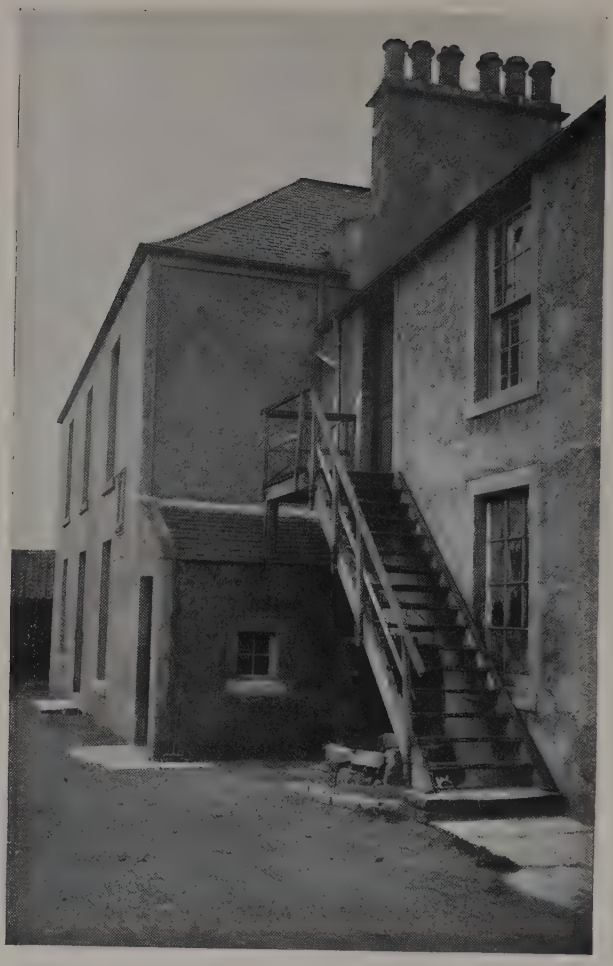


Photo by William Fowler, Selkirk.

CUNZIE (OR KENZIE) HOUSE, ANSTRUTHER.

Here Stevenson lodged, in 1868, when he was sent to Anstruther "to glean engineering experience from the building of the breakwater." The house is referred to in "Random Memories—The Education of an Engineer" (*Across the Plains*): "I lodged with a certain Bailie Brown, a carpenter by trade; and there as soon as dinner was despatched, in a chamber scented with dry rose leaves, drew in my chair to the table and proceeded to pour forth literature."

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA.

The house in which Stevenson lived from September to December, 1879.

"Monterey is a place where there is no summer or winter, and pines and sand and distant hills, and a bay all filled with real water from the Pacific."—To Sidney Colvin.

"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

I think now, this 5th or 6th of
April 1873, that I can see
my future life. I think it
will run stiller and stiller
year by year; a very quiet,
desultorily studious existence
If God only gives me tolerable
health, I think now I shall
be very happy; work and
science calm the mind and
stop gnawing in the brain; and
as I am glad to say that I
do now recognise that I shall
never be a great many I
may set myself peacefully
on a smaller journey; not
without hope of coming to
the inn before nightfall

Odass auch ich
Nach diesem ziel ein ewig wandeln
Mag!

Desiderata.

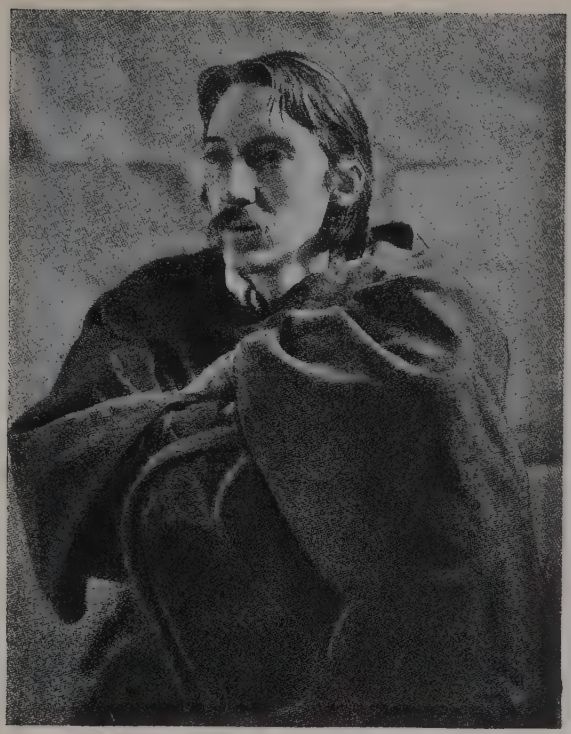
I Good-Health
II 2 to 3 hundred a year.
III O du lieben Gott, friends!

AMEN

Robert Louis Stevenson

From "Stevenson's Works." Swanston Edition.
(Chatto & Windus.)

FACSIMILE OF NOTE BY STEVENSON.

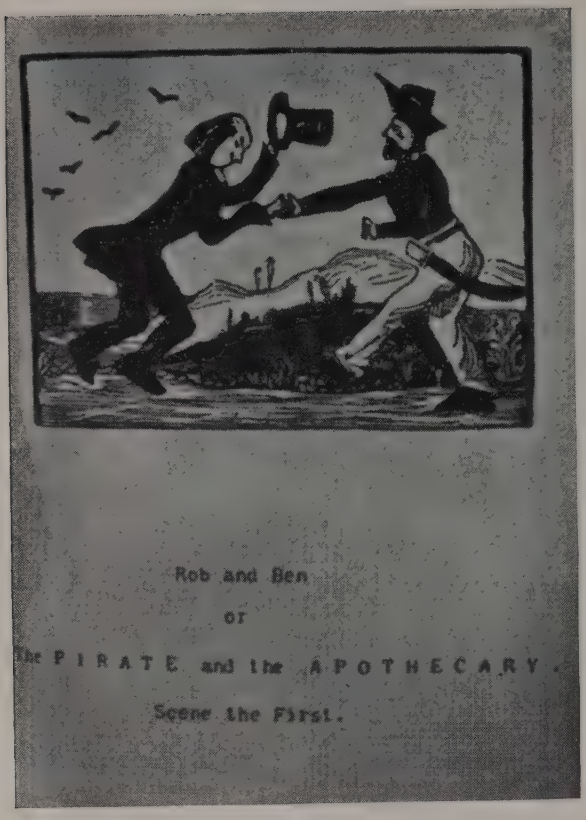


From a Photograph by Sir Percy Shelley.

STEVENSON,
1886.

"I send you two photographs: they are both done by Sir Percy Shelley, the poet's son, which may interest . . . I have before me four photographs of myself, done by Shelley's son: my nose is hooked, not like the eagle, indeed, but like the accipitrine family in man: well, out of these four, only one marks the bend, one makes it straight, and one suggests a turn-up. This throws a flood of light on calumnious man—and the scandalmongering sun. For personally I cling to my curve." —To W. H. Low.

"Letters of R. L. Stevenson. Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)



From "Stevenson's Works." Pentland Edition. (Cassell.)

At Davos, in 1880–1882, Stevenson and his step-son, Lloyd Osbourne (who was then 13), set up a toy printing press; they wrote burlesque stories between them, R. L. S. illustrating and Lloyd Osbourne printing them.

Rob and Ben

or

The P I R A T E and the

Scene the Sec

Rob and Ben

or

The P I R A T E and the A P O T H E C A R Y.

Scene the Third.

From "Stevenson's Works." Pentland Edition. (Cassell.)

TITLE PAGES OF SCENES 2 & 3 OF "ROB AND BEN."

Photo by Guy Rawlence.

CHALÉT LA SOLITUDE, HYÈRES,
WHERE STEVENSON LIVED FROM 1882 TO 1884

"Happy (said I), I was only happy once, that was at Hyères."

"The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

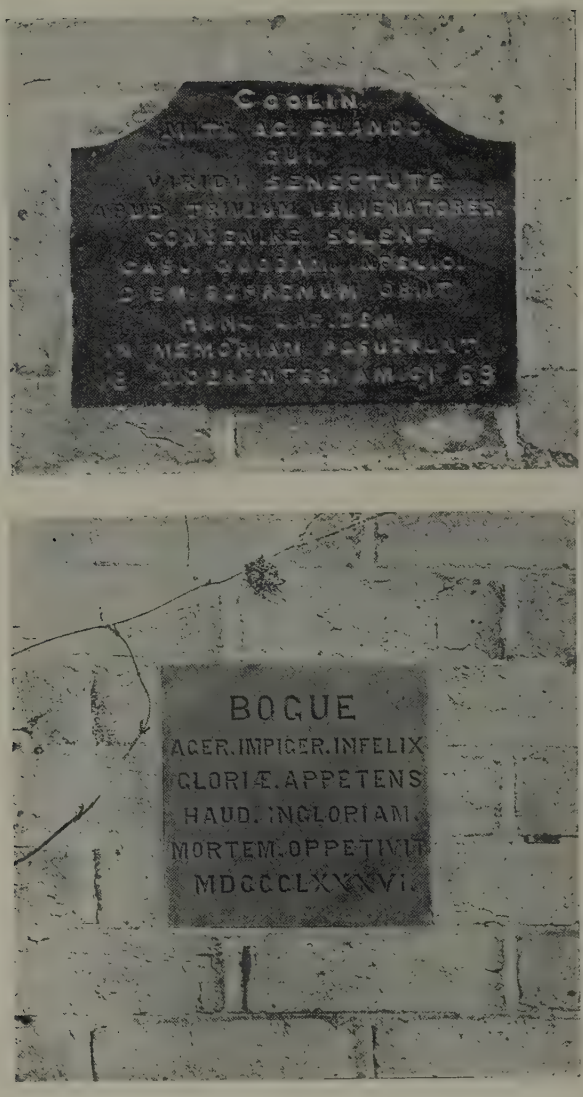


Photo by Clive Holland.

TABLETS ON THE WALL OF STEVENSON'S HOUSE AT BOURNEMOUTH, "SKERRYVORE," TO THE MEMORIES OF TWO OF HIS DOGS.

A photo taken at Bournemouth by W. T. Hawker.
From "Stevenson's Works." Pentland Edition (Cassell).

SKERRYVORE
Here all is sunny and when the truant gull
Skims the green level of the lawn, his wing
Dispetals roses; here the house is framed
Of kneaded brick and the plumed mountain pine
Such clay as artists fashion and such wood
As the tree climbing urchin breaks

From an Etching by Leslie M. Ward.
By permission of Mr. Ernest Cooper, Bournemouth.

SKERRYVORE,
STEVENSON'S HOUSE AT BOURNEMOUTH.

THE APPRENTICESHIP OF R. L. STEVENSON . .

THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN MEREDITH AND STEVENSON. . . . . .

STEVENSON'S BOOKS . . . . . .

TO TUSITALA IN VAILIMA . . . . . .

Beneath lies the Lothian plain dotted with villages, blue smoke blowing westward over it, while to seaward is the pyramid of Berwick Law with the Bass a-tiptoe looking over its shoulder. Beneath there is a fine tangle of moss and heather, peat-hag and bracken, in which to play at hunted Covenanter. It was just here that Robert Louis Stevenson found his articulate soul. The spring is still there, the trickle of water, the one inconsiderable but indubitable pool, overhung by the smallest stone that was ever called a "rock." But for literary purposes 'tis an excellent rock. More excellent was it when our John-a-Dreams lay hid in the fastnesses and made a world for himself—or many worlds rather—some of which he has since annexed to English literature. Long and lazy, frank with himself and with his intimates, sulky with those unworthy to be admitted into his little world of imaginings, it is small wonder if many, who then saw the moody boy, to this day retain the impression that he "had a want." Memory of Stevenson the Younger is mostly dead about the Pentlands. But some will still vaguely remember him as a lad "that lay aboot the dyke-backs wi' a buik"—this with the happiest touch of scorn for the "fecklessness" of such a performance. "He wasna thocht verra muckle o'." "It wasna jaloosed (suspected) that he wad ever come to muckle." These are the sole impressions which the inquirer can now gather hereabouts of the boyhood of the romancer. In these latter unfavourable impressions, there is definite trace of the vigorously expressed paternal disappointment when one of the "strenuous family which had dusted from its hands the sand of granite" took to lying about dykebacks and getting its fingers inky.

His literary works are totally unknown about Swanston and the Pentland edge. Only one old wife has an idea that there was a "laddie Stevenson" who had written "something aboot the Covenanters," a creditable performance which was hardly to be expected of one who "favoured the Estaiblished Kirk." She is of opinion that she saw the identical pamphlet not so long ago. Here it is found after strict search, carefully preserved between the leds (boards) of the Bible—its green cover re-covered with an overcoat of brown paper which announces itself as having formed part of a tea-bag sold twenty-five years ago by a grocer of Penicuik. The "something aboot the Covenanters" resolves itself into "THE PENTLAND RISING, a Page of History, 1666. Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 17, Princes Street, 1866." In the

centre of the bold apple-green within the teabag cover, is the motto :

> "A cloud of witnesses ly here,
> Who for Christ's interest did appear."
> —*Inscription on Battlefield at Rullion Green.*

The little pamphlet of twenty-two pages, the earliest and rarest of Robert Louis Stevenson's works, is very accurately dated as having been completed at "Edinburgh, 28th Nov., 1866," that, is, just a fortnight after he had completed his sixteenth year, and on the anniversary of the bi-centenary of the battle of Rullion Green. We may take it that the little pamphlet was written at Swanston with his eye on the immediate scene of the events. Childish enough in its writing, it is full of interest ; and, though crowded with references to the authorities (Wodrow, "Cloud of Witnesses," Naphthali, "Faithful Contendings," Kirkton, "Outed Minister," and even Defoe's "History of the Church"), for directness of impression and clearness of narrative it might have been written by a simple-minded eye-witness. There is no doubt on which side are the young author's sympathies. He is frankly partisan, as indeed every Scot must be by nature. The "persecutors" are all "bloody-minded" and "cruel." In this strenuous advocacy we see the lad who had already acted it all out on the green Pentland side. "I skulked in my favourite wilderness like a Cameronian of the Killing Time, and John Todd was my Claverhouse, and his dogs my questing dragoons." This is the true ineradicable way of learning history. The man who has thus learned his history may assume in later life a superficial calmness of criticism, he may read apologies for Clavers and Lag with resolve to rise superior to prejudice ; he may even write them ; but he will ever be Covenanter down at the heart of him, so that he cannot look upon a rusty old flag hung among bones and battle-axes in a museum without the water rising in his eyes, brimming to the overflow, and without gripping hands till the nails sink into the flesh to keep down something that takes him in the throat.

So it is strange in Stevenson's books, as well as in his conversation, to see his cosmopolitan ease, the calm light in the eyes which look out at once smiling and observant upon the wide world, in a moment exploded by a flash of suggestion from the bleak Nor'land where the whaups are crying about the Martyrs' graves.

Does one but mention the Grassmarket to him, and it is no more Louis Stevenson of Samoa and the World that listens, but the lad who at sixteen wrote of young Hugh McKail who was martyred there in the flower of his youth; it is no intellectual Gallio, but one who, though he might have marched with the clans from the braes of Mar because the skirl of pipes makes him mad, yet longs like Peden to be "wi' Ritchie" in the last stand which the preacher-soldier Richard Cameron made on Airds Moss. Artistic feeling, the society of many men, the influences of spheres where the Covenanters are only spoken of as ignorant rebels, have not changed the essential Covenanting base of Stevenson's character. Carlyle remained Annandale Dissenter till the day of his death. Whatever the rough insolence of his Annandale speech, Carlyle always acted as if in the presence of his mother's God. And does but a flag flutter, or a waft of smoke bring back the peat fires, and Robert Stevenson is back again in the much-enduring land, whose glories are forlorn hopes and whose victories the unconquerable despair of hopeless men fighting with their backs to the wall. This is that Pentland lad who wrote of the Covenant men in words which he may wish now to alter, but whose spirit is still his own—"Perhaps the storm of harsh and fiercely jubilant noises, the clanging of trumpets the rattling of drums, and the hootings and jeerings of an unfeeling mob, which were the last sounds they heard on earth, might, when the mortal fight was over, when the river of death was passed, add tenfold peacefulness to the shores which they had reached." A page further on we have a picture which gives us a glimpse of the eerie and other-world element in the lad. "Kirkton the historian and popular tradition tell us," he says, "of a flame that would often rise from the grave, in a moss near Carnwath, of some of these poor rebels; of how it crept along the ground, of how it covered the house of the murderer, and scared him with its lurid glare."

The manner in which this is told leaves us little room to doubt that the picture of the flame-wrapped house and the persecutor within, clammy terror sitting in the inwards of his soul, was one which long haunted the imagination of the boy. The idea is one which came out of the same basket as the spiritual terrors of Dr. Jekyll, and of Gordon Darnaway in "The Merry Men," and of Uncle Ebenezer alone in the great house of the Shaws. It shows that Stevenson, even as a schoolboy, was continually wandering round the confines

of the other world, and companying with the men of a time to whom such things as these were the sternest of realities—the days, indeed, when in the words of the famous rhyme :

> "Hab Dab and Dawvid Dinn,
> Dang the De'il ower Dabson's Linn."

Stevenson never overwhelms his incident with landscape description like the school of William Black, in whose books the incident has often to dodge the pages of solid description in order to show its face at all. Nor, like some, does he go forward, habitually blind to outward nature, and only deign specially to look at a scene when he has occasion to describe it ; he observes, as one might say, *currently*, often without being conscious of doing so. We seldom find him sitting down to it, as it were, and saying, "Lo, I will describe a landscape." Yet even at sixteen, the boy who in the fulness of his powers was to write the marvellous description of the Merry Men of Aros, had begun to learn his trade. It is instructive to compare the following two passages :—"On such a night, he peers upon a world of blackness where the waters wheel and boil, where the waves joust together with the noise of an explosion, and the foam towers and vanishes in the twinkling of an eye. Never before had I seen the Merry Men thus violent. The fury, height, and transiency of their spoutings was a thing to be seen and not recounted. High over our heads on the cliff rose their white columns in the darkness ; and the same instant, like phantoms, they were gone. Sometimes three at a time would thus aspire and vanish ; sometimes a gust took them, and the spray would fall about us, heavy as a wave. Yet the spectacle was rather maddening in its levity than impressive by its force. Thought was beaten down by the confounding uproar ; a gleeful vacancy possessed the brains of men, a state akin to madness ; and I found myself at times following the dance of the Merry Men as it were a tune upon a jigging instrument."

Here the magic is due not to any very remarkable photographic accuracy of description, certainly not to the cataloguing which sometimes passes for realism, but to an author whose personality is never hid from us, and who is conscious of his power to charm us, making himself part of what he describes, and throwing the limelight of his imagination upon the mad dance of the waters. This description is as successful as Barrie's island in the floods in the "Little Minister" and

the Stonehenge scene in Thomas Hardy's "Tess" are the reverse, because Stevenson has not attempted to take more of possibility out of his characters than he had put into their natures. In "The Merry Men," circumstance and personality go together and mutually persuade us of the truth of each.

If a description written by Stevenson, the apprentice, be taken to compare with this masterpiece of the complete craftsman, the result is very instructive.

"The sun, going down behind the Pentlands, cast golden lights and blue shadows on their snow-clad summits, slanted obliquely into the rich plain before them, bathing with rosy splendour the leafless, snow-sprinkled trees, and fading gradually into shadow in the distance. To the south, too, they beheld a deep-shaded amphitheatre of heather and bracken—the course of the Esk, near Penicuik, winding about at the foot of its gorge—the broad, brown expanse of Maw Moss—and fading into blue indistinctness in the south, the wild heath-clad Peeblesshire hills."

Clearly, of course, this is the work of a beginner, but it is work done with an eye on the object—carefully done too, for though the effect of the whole be commonplace, it is so because it is easier to describe the Day of Judgment than an ordinary sunset. From Rullion Grèen every word is true, absolutely and exactly. The sun does still "slant obliquely," the Moorfoots do curve round to form an amphitheatre, through which the Esk water runs. Maw Moss is still a "broad, brown expanse." On the whole in "The Pentland Rising" we have a prentice work of no ordinary promise, and one which, written at the age of between fifteen and sixteen, reveals many of the most interesting and remarkable characteristics of a style and personality as unique as any in all English literature.

1893.

WRITTEN IN A COPY OF MR. STEVENSON'S "CATRIONA"

By William Watson

GLORIOUS Sir Walter, Shakespeare's brother brain,
Fortune's invincible, victor-victim Scott,
Mere lettered fame, 'tis said, esteeming not,
Save as it ministered to weightier gain,
Had yet his roseate dream, though dreamed in vain:
The dream that, crowning his terrestrial lot,
A race of great and splendid heirs begot
Of his own loins o'er Abbotsford should reign.

The Fates forbad, but promised, in amends,
One mighty scion of his heart and mind:
And where strange isles the languid ocean fleck,—
Far from the cold kiss of the northern wind,—
Lo, the rare spirit through whom we hail as friends
The immortal Highland maid and Alan Breck!

"The Poems of William Watson." 2 vols.
(John Lane.)

that the hero cannot by any possibility do or think anything wrong, or commit even the smallest indiscretion, the authors have given themselves away, and by no possibility can readers be any more interested in the adventures and fortunes of such immaculate but unattractive characters."

My sister who, as I have said before, had a more perceptive appreciation of the possibilities of his silence than my duller self, gradually acquired possession of all his publications; and when two years ago she passed away from among us, she left to me as her special bequest her collection of his books, and so as I write at my desk to-day in the bookcase at my side stand all my Stevensons in their first editions, reminding me of those delectable days in Surrey of which I have endeavoured to give a little account in this short article.

TO
TUSITALA IN VAILIMA
(ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON)

By Edmund Gosse

I

CLEAREST voice in Britain's chorus,
Tusitala!
Years ago, years four-and-twenty,
Gray the cloudland drifted o'er us,
When these ears first heard you talking,
When these eyes first saw you smiling.
Years of famine, years of plenty,
Years of beckoning and beguiling,
Years of yielding, shifting, baulking,—
When the good ship *Clansman* bore us
Round the spits of Tobermory,
Glens of Voulin like a vision,
Crags of Knoidart, huge and hoary,—
We had laughed in light derision,
Had they told us, told the daring
Tusitala,
What the year's pale hands were bearing,—
Years in stately, dim division.

IV

Vanish'd? ay, that's still the trouble,
Tusitala!

Though your tropic isle rejoices,
'Tis to us an isle of Voices
Hollow like the elfin double
Cry of disembodied echoes,
Or an owlet's wicked laughter,
Or the cold and hornèd gecko's
Croaking from a ruined rafter,—
Voices these of things existing,
Yet incessantly resisting
Eyes and hands that follow after;
You are circled, as by magic,
In a surf-built palmy bubble,
Tusitala;

Fate hath chosen, but the choice is
Half delectable, half tragic,
For we hear you speak, like Moses,
And we greet you back, enchanted,
But reply's no sooner granted,
Than the rifted cloud-land closes.

September, 1894.

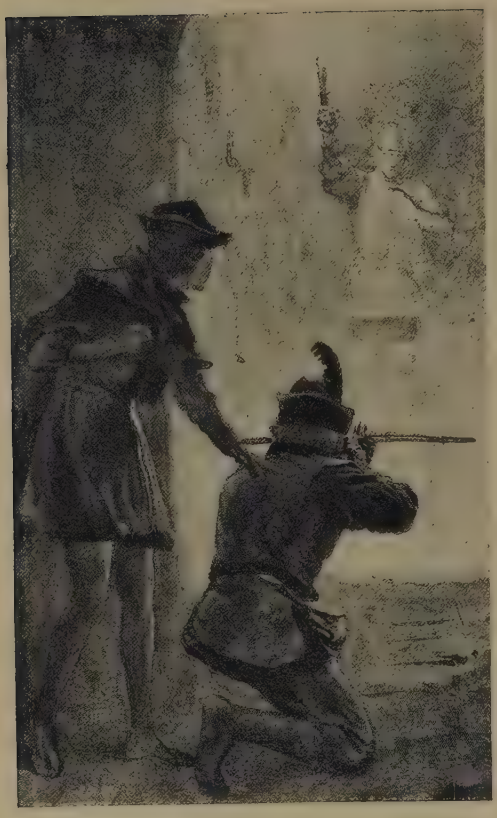
Dedication of "In Russet and Silver.
From "The Collected Poems of Edmund Gosse" (Heinemann).

From a painting by W. R. S. Stott in the new illustrated edition of "Kidnapped" that Messrs. Cassell and Co. are just publishing.

"NEVER A WORD SAID MY UNCLE . . . BUT JUST SAT . . . . AND STARED UPON US LIKE A MAN TURNED TO STONE."

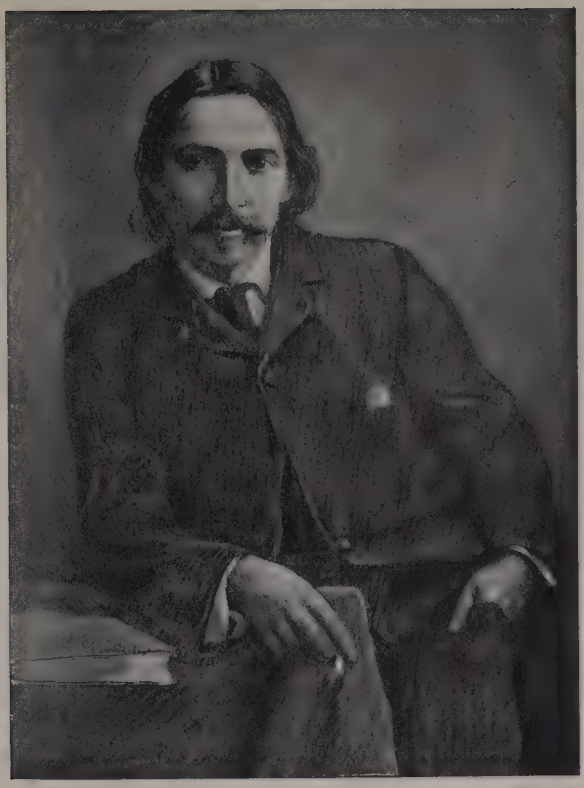
From "Treasure Island."
(Cassell.)

"DO YOU CALL THAT A HEAD ON YOUR SHOULDERS, OR A BLESSED DEAD EYE?"



From "The Black Arrow."
(Cassell.)

"HE CARRIED IN HIS HAND A BURNING TORCH, WHICH MADE HIM A BETTER MARK."



R. L. STEVENSON.
85

From "A Child's Garden of Verses."
(John Lane.)

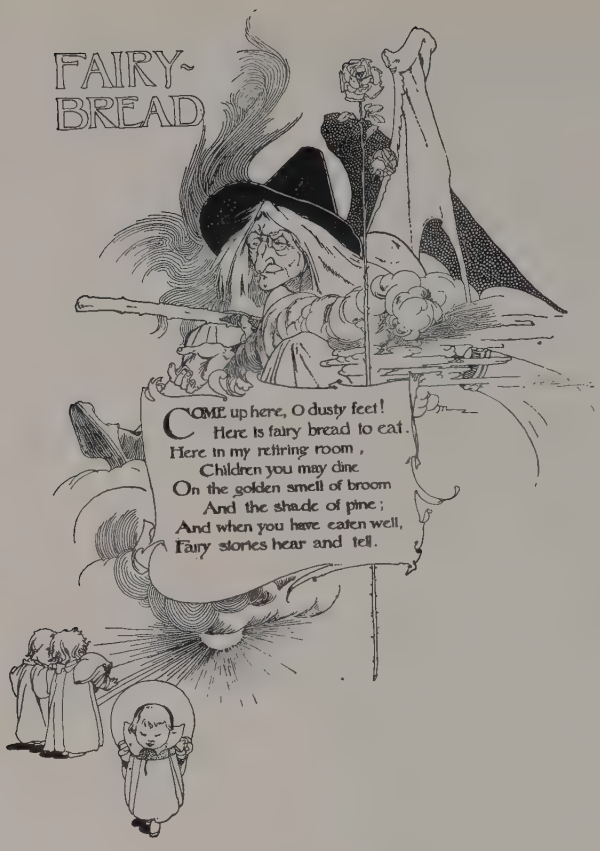
Drawn by Charles Robinson.

No

The moon
has a
face like
the
clock in
the hall;

From "A Child's Garden of Verses."
(John Lane.)

Drawn by Charles Robinson.


FAIRY-
BREAD
COME up here, O dusty feet!
Here is fairy bread to eat.
Here in my retiring room,
Children you may dine
On the golden smell of broom
And the shade of pine;
And when you have eaten well,
Fairy stories hear and tell.

From "A Child's Garden of Verses."
(John Lane.)

Drawn by Charles Robinson.

PRINCES STREET, EDINBURGH.

From "Edinburgh," by R. L. Stevenson.
Illustrated by T. Hamilton Crawford.
(Seeley, Service & Co.)

"Yet when the lamp from my enquiring eyes
Shall dwindle and recede, the voice of love
Fall insignificant on my closing ears,
What sound shall come but the old cry of the wind
In our inclement city?"

"To my Old Familiars." Stevenson's "Poems." (Chatto & Windus.)

From "Stevenson's Works." Pentland Edition. (Cassell.)

R. L. STEVENSON.

From a Painting by John S. Sargent, R.A.

"Sargent was down again, and painted a portrait of me walking about in my own dining-room; in my own velveteen jacket, and twisting as I go my own moustache." Skerryvore, Bournemouth, 1885.

"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

HOUSE AT LAKE SARANAC, IN THE ADIRONDACKS, WHERE STEVENSON LIVED FROM OCTOBER, 1887, TO APRIL, 1888.

From "Stevenson's Works." Pentland Edition. (Cassell.)

"We have a wooden house on a hill-top, overlooking a river, and a village about a quarter of a mile away, and very wooded hills; the whole scene is very Highland, bar want of heather, and the wooden houses."

"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

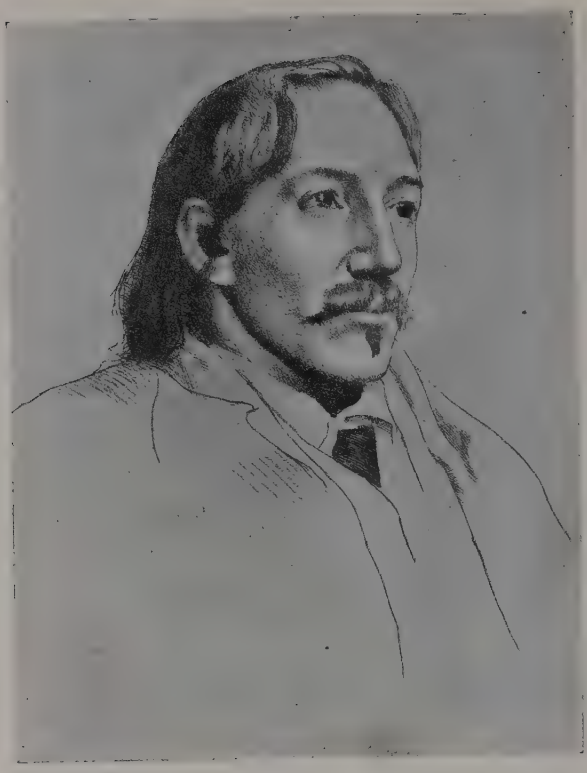
From a Photograph by Mr. A. G. Dew-Smith.
[By courtesy of Messrs. Heffer & Co., Cambridge.

Lent by Messrs. Chatto & Windus.

STEVENSON.
From a drawing by A. S. Boyd.

From "Catriona." (Cassell.)

"SHE DROPPED ME ONE OF HER CURTSEYS, WHICH WERE EXTRAORDINARY TAKING."



From an Etching by William Strang.

STEVENSON.

"A deal of Ariel, just a streak of Puck,
Much Anthony, of Hamlet most of all,
And something of the Shorter-Catechist."

"In Hospital." "Poems," by W. E. Henley. (Nútt.)

From "Stevenson's Works." Pentland Edition. (Cassell.)

MRS. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.
Photo by Hollinger.

"Trusty, dusky, vivid, true,
With eyes of gold and bramble-dew,
Steel-true and blade-straight,
The great artificer
Made my mate."

"My Wife." From "Poems" by R. L. Stevenson. (Chatto & Windus.)

From "Stevenson's Works.' Pentland Edition. (Cassell.)

STEVENSON'S RESIDENCE AT VAILIMA, SAMOA.

"We are in our house after a fashion. . . . The place is beautiful beyond dreams: some fifty miles of the Pacific spread in front; deep woods all round; a mountain making in the sky a profile of huge trees upon our left."—To Edmund Gosse.

"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

A pencil drawing made from life by
Percy F. S. Spence, at Sydney, N.S.W.
(*Now in the National Portrait Gallery*).

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON,
1893.

A GROUP AT SAMOA :

LLOYD OSBOURNE, CAPT. WURMBRAND, HENRY SIMELE, AND STEVENSON.

From "Stevenson's Works." Pentland Edition (Cassell.)

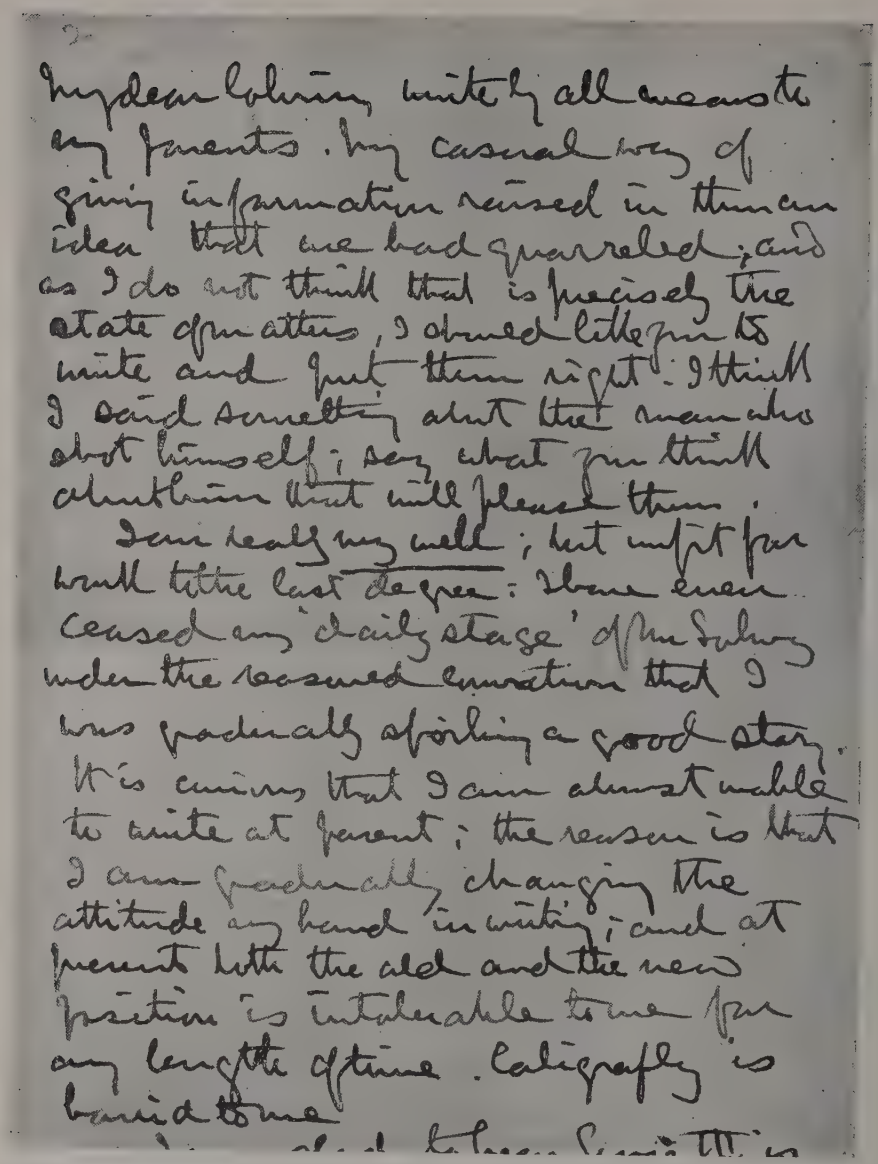
"Captain Count Wurmbrand was 'a soldier of fortune in Servia and Turkey, a charming, clever, kindly creature'; and Henry Simele one of Stevenson's servants."—See Stevenson's "Letters."

Monochrome reproduction of the coloured frontispiece to "The Pavilion on the Links," illustrated by Gordon Browne, R.I. (Chatto & Windus.)

"THAT GIRL, AS YOU CALL HER, IS MY WIFE."

Photo by H. Walter Barnett.

STEVENSON.



Facsimile of letter kindly lent by Sir Sidney Colvin.

1. Specimen of a variation of Stevenson's ordinary handwriting about the years 1873-5. The latter part of the above letter to Sir Sidney Colvin contains a reference to the new style the writer is practising. This style only lasted during his stay at Mentone, November, 1873—April, 1874.

608 Bush Street
San Francisco.
Cal.

My dear Colvin, This is a circular letter to tell my estate fully. You have no right to it, being the worst of correspondents; but I wish to efface the impression of my last, so to you it goes.

Any time between 8 and ½ past nine in the morning, a slender gentleman in an ulster, with a volume buttoned into the breast of it, may be observed leaving no 608 Bush and descending Powell with an active step. The gentleman is R. L. S; the volume relates to Benjamin Franklin, on whom he meditates one of his charming essays. He descends Powell, crosses Market, and descends in Sixth on the Branch of the original Pine Street Coffee House; no less; I believe he could be capable of going to the original itself, if he could only find it. In the branch he seats himself at a table

Dear S. C,

and damn your eyes for not coming!

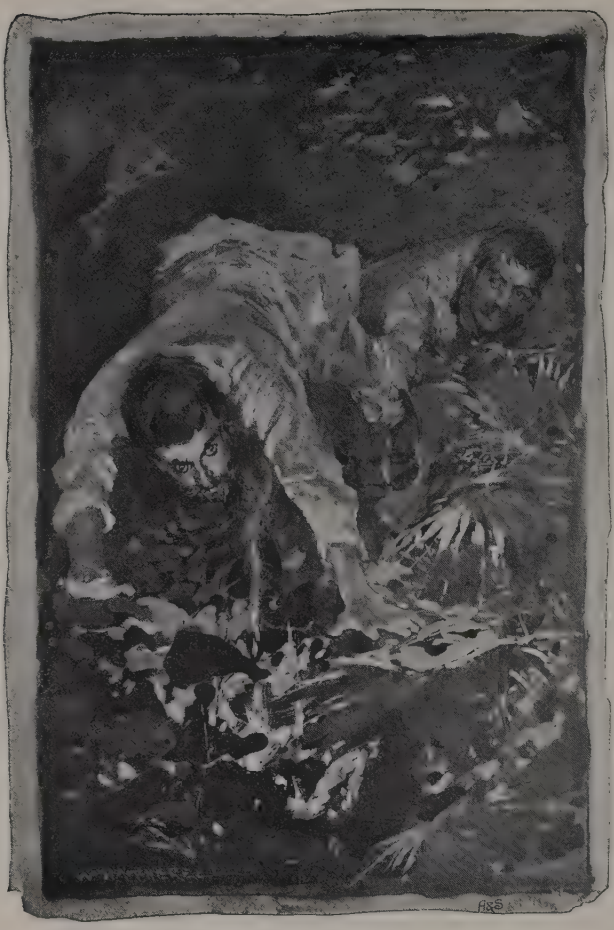
I have received Eastlake Mary, Spencer Walpole and Sly's from the publishers. Pray tell me what you can do - about all about the despatches - by telegram. Longman has hardly offered £10; and your silence keeps me to a stand.

Come, as soon as you can, bad man.

R. L. S.

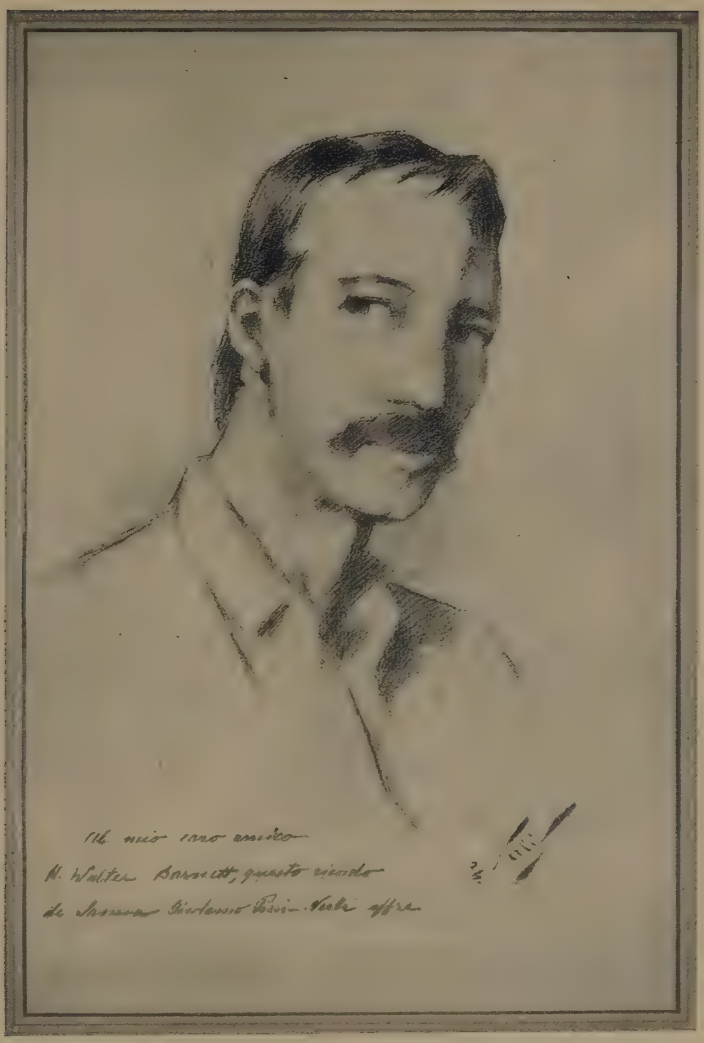
Facsimile of letters kindly lent by Sir Sidney Colvin.

2. Specimen of the close and neat upright style Stevenson always (from about 1876-7) used in writing for the Press and often (as, for instance, during all his stay in California, August, 1879—April, 1880) in private correspondence, whether using ruled paper or otherwise. 3. Specimen of the loose, sloping hand (a good deal resembling his wife's) which Stevenson adopted after his return from California, and used generally in private correspondence during the Davos—Hyères—Bournemouth and Saranac periods (1881-87). From 1888 to his death in 1894 he varied in private correspondence between this style and No. 2. using No. 2 always in work for the printers, except that from 1892 (having had threatenings of writers' cramp) he often dictated both letters and literary compositions to his step-daughter, Mrs. Strong.



From "Island Nights' Entertainments." (Cassell)

"I HAD HIM BY THE ANKLE."
Drawn by W. Hatherell.



From an original drawing by Count Girolamo Nerli, given by Stevenson to Mr. H. Walter Barnett, with whose permission it is now reproduced.

R. L. S.

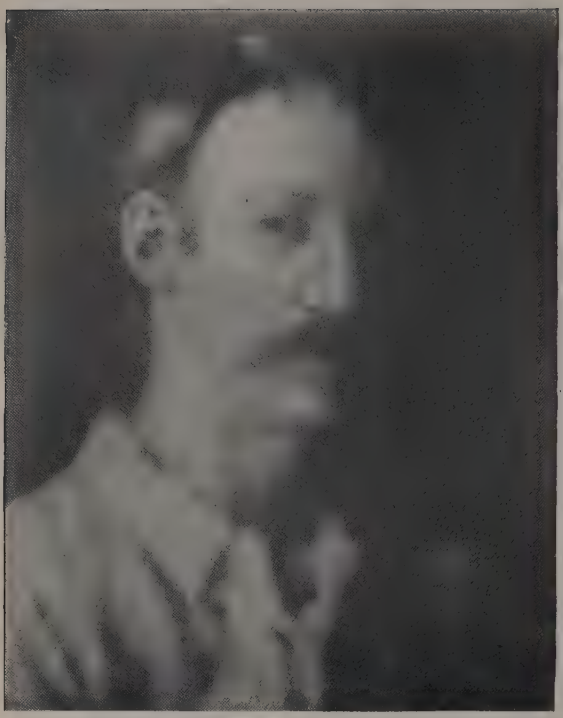
Photo by J. Patrick, Edinburgh.

STEVENSON AT VAILIMA.

"Here are no trains, only men pacing barefoot. No carts or carriages; at worst the rattle of a horse s shoes among the rocks."—To Sidney Colvin.
"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

Photo by H. Walter Barnett.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.



From "Stevenson's Works." Pentland Edition.
(Cassell.)

R. L. S.
A portrait, painted at Samoa by
Count Girolamo Nerli.

From a painting by W. Hatherell.
(Hodder and Stoughton.)

"ALL TURNED AT THE CRY, AND THERE IN THE WILD LIGHT OF THE MORNING, HEAVING STRAIGHT FOR MIDWAY REEF, WAS THE BRIG *Flying Scud* OF HULL."
The Wrecker.

STEVENSON'S LETTERS . . .

TO COUNT GIROLAMO NERLI .

THE WORKS OF R. L. STEVENSON

TO PROSPERO AT SAMOA . .

STEVENSON'S LETTERS

By S. R. Crockett

OUT of these noble volumes of Stevenson letters* two things come to me of new, of which the first is the more important. Before and above all else these books (with their appendage the Vailima Correspondence) are the record of as noble a friendship as I know of in letters. And perhaps, as following from this, we have here a Stevenson without shadows. Not even a full statue, but rather a medallion in low relief—as it were the St. Gaudens bust done into printer's ink.

It is difficult to say precisely what one feels, with Mr. Colvin (and long may he be spared) still in the midst of us. And yet I cannot help putting it on record that what impresses me most in these volumes, wherein are so many things lovely and of good report, is the way in which, in order that one friend may shine like a city set on a hill, the other friend consistently retires himself into deepest shade. Yet all the same Mr. Colvin is ever on the spot. You can trace him on every page—emergent only when an explanation must be made, never saying a word too much, obviously in possession of all the facts, but desirous of no reward or fame or glory to himself if only Tusitala continue to shine the first among his peers. Truly there is a love not, perhaps, *surpassing* the love of women, but certainly *passing* it, in that it is different in kind and degree.

Obviously, however, Mr. Colvin often wounded with the faithful wounds of a friend, and sometimes in return he was blessed, and sometimes he was banned. But always the next letter made it all right.

To many outside of his family and familiars Stevenson was always a charming and sometimes a regular correspondent. To myself, with no claim upon him save that of a certain instinctive mutual liking, he wrote with the utmost punctuality every two months from 1888 to the week of his death. It is the irony of fate that about thirty of these letters lie buried somewhere beneath, above, or behind an impenetrable barrier

* "Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson." 2 Vols. (Methuen.)

of 25,000 books. In a certain great "flitting" conducted by village workmen these manuscripts disappeared, and have so far eluded all research. But at the next upturning of the Universe, I doubt not they will come to light and be available for Mr. Colvin's twentieth edition. It was a great grief to me that I had no more to contribute besides those few but precious documents which appear in their places in the second volume of "Letters to Family and Friends."

Albeit, in spite of every such blank, here is such richness as has not been in any man's correspondence since Horace Walpole's—yet never, like his, acidly-based, never razor-edged, never for all Stevenson's Edinburgh extraction, either west-endy or east-windy. Here in brief are two books, solid, sane, packed with wit and kindliness and filled full of the very height of living.

Not all of Stevenson is here—it seems to me, not even the greater part of Stevenson. Considered from one point of view, there is more of the depths of the real Stevenson in a single chapter of Miss Eve Simpson's "Edinburgh Days," especially in the chapter entitled "Life at Twenty-five," than in any of these 750 fair pages. But with such a friend as Mr. Colvin this was inevitable. He has carried out that finest of the maxims of amity, "Censure your friend in private, praise him in public!" And, indeed, if ever man deserved to be praised it was Stevenson. So generous was he, so ready to be pleased with other men's matters, so hard to satisfy with his own, a child among children, a man among men, a king among princes. Yet, all the same, anything of the nature of a ploy stirred him to the shoe soles, down to that last tragic bowl of salad and bottle of old Burgundy on the night before he died. He was a fairy prince and a peasant boy in one, Aladdin with an old lamp under his arm always ready to be rubbed, while outside his window Jack's beanstalk went clambering heavenward a foot every five minutes.

All the same, it gives one a heartache—even those of us who knew him least—to think that no more of those wide sheets closely written and many times folded will ever come to us through the post. And what the want must be to those who knew him longer and better, to Mr. Colvin, Mr. Gosse, Mr. Henley, only they know.

For myself, I am grateful for every word set down here. It is all sweet, and true, and gracious. The heaven seems kinder to the earth while we read, and in the new portrait Tusitala's large dark eyes gleam at us from beneath the

penthouse of his brows with a gipsy-like and transitory suggestion.

"The Sprite" someone called him. And it was a true word. For here he had no continuing city. Doubtless, though, he lightens some Farther Lands with his bright wit, and such ministering spirits as he may cross on his journeying are finding him good company. *Talofa Tusitala,* do not go very far away! We too would follow you down the "Road of Loving Hearts."

1899.

TO COUNT GIROLAMO NERLI.

(We are indebted to Mrs. Jeanne Butler, of Westbury-on-Trym, for a copy of the following verses written by Stevenson while sitting to Count Nerli for his portrait. "Count Nerli was a friend of my husband's," writes Mrs. Butler, "and gave him the verses on his return from the island.")

Did ever mortal man hear tell of sae singular a ferlie
As the coming to Apia here of the painter, Mr. Nerli.
He cam, and O for a human friend, of a' he was the perli;
The pearl of a' the painter folk was surely Mr. Nerli.
He took a thraw to paint mysel', he painted late and early,
O, wow, the mony a yawn I've yawned in the beard of Mr. Nerli.
Whiles I would sleep, and whiles would wake, and whiles was mair than surly,
I wondered sair, as I sat there, fornenst the eyes of Nerli:
Oh will he paint me the way I want, as bonny as a girlie?
Or will he paint me an ugly tyke, and be damned to Mr. Nerli!
But still, and on, and whichever it is, he is a canty kerli—
The Lord protect the back and neck of honest Mr. Nerli.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

VAILIMA,

SAMOA.

THE WORKS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

By H. C. Beeching

I

THERE are many ways of marking the milestones on the road of life; and certainly not the worst is by a register of the books which have added to its joy. The present writer was born too late to hail in succession the masterpieces of Dickens or Thackeray, or even of George Eliot—"Daniel Deronda," which fell in his way hot from the press, ministered no delight—but he came into the world in the very nick of time to enjoy, one by one, and to the full, the delicate fruits of Stevenson's genius. "Treasure Island," "Prince Otto," "Kidnapped," "The Master of Ballantrae," "Catriona," glorified the days in which they appeared with the reddest letters in the calendar. Of these, however, it is inadmissible to speak at this time; for the occasion of the present article* is the publication of the first four volumes only of the new Pentland edition of Stevenson's collected work; the first volume opening with the "Inland Voyage," and the last coming to a close with the "New Arabian Nights." That is to say, the present issue comprises the journeyman work of the writer, already master of his tools, but still uncertain how best to employ them. And yet the last volume of these preliminary exercises, which contains the short stories of 1877–79, shows unmistakably in what direction the writer will exhibit his strength. I do not understand why the title of "The New Arabian Nights" was extended to "The Pavilion on the Links," "A Lodging for the Night," "The Sire de Malétroit's Door," and "Providence and the Guitar." It surely can belong only to the "Suicide Club" and the "Rajah's Diamond." The other tales have no link with these, nor are they in the same *genre*. And the blunder is unfortunate, as the greater stories are thus named of the less. The modernisation of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid

* 1907. "Works of Stevenson." Pentland Edition. (Cassell, Chatto, Heinemann, and Longmans.)

was an adventurous idea, brilliantly carried out; it pushes one step further, into capital farce, Tennyson's identification of King Arthur with a certain English gentleman of stateliest port; but the stories themselves, a mixture of melodrama and burlesque, have not the remotest air of reality, and hardly bear a second reading. Moreover the "Suicide Club" contains one picture, that of Mr. Malthus, of such a nightmare horribleness that it would not have passed the censor in any community of Utopia. There must have been a strain of brutality somewhere in Stevenson's fine nature, which cropped out once and again, even in the later books. "The Body Snatcher," published (save the mark) as a Christmas story, was the only tale in which this strain predominated; but the character of old Pew in "Treasure Island," and Mr. Hyde, the *alter ego* of Dr. Jekyll, are imaginations that ought not to have been imagined. Plato, we may be sure, would have invited their creator to leave his commonwealth at the earliest possible moment. However, this strain in the nature, if I may put it so, was for the most part kept well in check by more gentle and humane qualities. There are strong, even stark, characters enough in other tales—Northmour, for example, in the "Pavilion on the Links"; and the fraudulent banker Huddlestone in the same story is, as much as Mr. Malthus, a study in the psychology of fear; but these characters are well within the limits of literary decency. The "Pavilion on the Links," indeed, has all the qualities which combine to make the true Stevenson. There is the landscape, so well drawn, and so completely in key with the beauty or horror of the situation; there is the single vivid incident, etched in with acid, sharp and unforgettable—in this case, the noise of the wet finger on the window-pane without and the voice that shouted "Traditore" through the shutters; there is the wholesomeness of the "sentiment" in the Aristotelian sense of the word; and there is the perfection of the phrasing. The romantic tale of the strange courtship that went on in the two hours before dawn inside the "Sire de Malétroit's Door" is singularly beautiful, and unlike anything else in fiction. And then there are those charming French "artists" in "Providence and the Guitar"—studied, it would seem, from a broken-down actor and his wife, full of sentiment, described in the "Inland Voyage"—who preach that Christian lesson which Stevenson was never tired of inculcating, that the life of a man does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesses. Finally there is

"A Lodging for the Night," with its two scenes in the inn parlour and the Lord of Brisetout's *hôtel*. I do not believe that Villon was, as Stevenson has represented him, a compound of wolf and pig, with some unexplained capacity for making *ballades*, but with no capacity for seeing anything in his chivalrous host for the night but "a very dull old gentleman." The philosophy of revolt against society, which Stevenson has elsewhere expounded, should have saved him from such a lapse of critical imagination. But strike out the name of the poet, and one can enjoy to the full the vividness of the contrast between the two scenes and the wintry Paris landscape that unites them.

The mention of Villon brings me to speak of the only part of Stevenson's early writing which seems to fail of its mark, and that is the critical work, collected into "Familiar Studies of Men and Books." Stevenson, in his humble preface, recognises his tendency to depreciate; a curious fault in an exponent of the philosophy of looking always on the better side. But Stevenson was not built for a critic. His imagination was always at work on the material that came before him for study. What seemed a striking saying summoned up in his mind a vivid picture of the man who would say such a thing, and this became for him the man's true portrait; but if the saying was really but an *obiter dictum*, not really characteristic, or if by some chance it had been misinterpreted, then the whole character was misread. I do not believe, as I have said, in the character drawn of François Villon. Most Scotsmen fail to see the likeness in the portrait of Burns; but with that controversy an Englishman had better not intermeddle. But any reader of "Pepys' Diary" can see that Stevenson's "little sensualist in a periwig" is far enough from the truth about that interesting person. It may be worth while to indicate a few points in which the painter has misrepresented his sitter, because when a great artist paints a portrait we are apt to take the lifelikeness for granted, and also because Stevenson believed he had done Pepys something more than justice. Take, for a very clear example of misrepresentation, the passage about the relations of Pepys with William Penn, the Quaker:

"Meanwhile there was growing up next door to him that beautiful nature William Penn. It is odd that Pepys condemned him for a fop; odd, though natural enough when you see Penn's portrait, that Pepys was jealous of him with his wife. But the cream of the story is when Penn publishes his 'Sandy Foundation Shaken,' and Pepys has it read aloud by his wife. 'I find it,'

he says, 'so well writ, as I think, it is too good for him ever to have writ it; and it is a serious sort of book, and *not fit for everybody to read*.' [The italics are Stevenson's.] Nothing is more galling to the merely respectable than to be brought in contact with religious ardour. Pepys had his own foundation, sandy enough, but dear to him from practical considerations, and he would read the book with true uneasiness of spirit: for conceive the blow if, by some plaguy accident, this Penn were to convert him!"

And so on for some dozen lines more. But if the reader, one in ten thousand, were to turn to Pepys to see what he really did say about Penn's book, he would find that what he thought dangerous in it was not its enthusiasm but its heresy. This is the passage: "Pelling hath got me W. Penn's book *against the Trinity*. I got my wife to read it to me," etc. The title of the book was "The Sandy Foundations Shaken: or those doctrines of one God subsisting in three distinct and separate persons, etc., refuted from the authority of Scripture testimonies and right reason." So that all Stevenson's very cynical commentary on the words "not fit for everybody to read" rest on a simple misunderstanding. Or take another point. Pepys buys a "roguish French book," and notes in his Diary that he bought it in plain binding, meaning to burn it when read, "that it may not stand in the list of books, nor among them, *to disgrace them*, if it should be found." Stevenson paraphrases this: "He is full of precautions to conceal *the disgrace of the purchase*." But Pepys is writing as a collector with a respect to the dignity of his library; he is not even considering the question about the morality or immorality of reading "roguish" books. So, again. Stevenson's idea that Pepys was a sort of leaf insect who took his moral colour from his neighbours, and was only virtuous when under the influence of Sir William Coventry, is not supported by the Diary. Coventry was no better than his contemporaries in regard to the seventh commandment, and in regard to the eighth, we find him more than once making a sort of *apologia* to Pepys. Or, once more, what ground is there for Stevenson's wild idea that Pepys intended his Diary to be one day made public? "The greatness of his life," he says, "was open, yet he longed to communicate its smallness also; and, while contemporaries bowed before him, he must buttonhole posterity with the news that his periwig was once alive with nits." I confess lively writing of this sort, when it belittles the characters of the dead without a spark of evidence, makes me angry. Stevenson quotes the solemn sentence with which the Diary closes; but if he had raised

his eyes to the sentence next before it, he would have found that it disposed of his theory: "And thus ends all that I doubt I shall ever be able to do with my own eyes in the keeping of my journal, I being not able to do it any longer, having done now so long as to undo my eyes almost every time that I take a pen in my hand; and therefore, whatever comes of it, I must forbear: and therefore resolve from this time forward to have it kept by my people in long-hand, and must be contented to set down no more than is fit for them *and all the world to know*; or if there be anything, I must endeavour to keep a margin in my book open, to add here and there a note in shorthand with my own hand." Young gentlemen with a genius for style should be warned off criticism.

The valuable part of Stevenson's writing outside his stories is that in which he writes about himself. About himself and his travels and his meditations on men and things we could never have too much, because he looked at the world with fresh eyes. I have a fancy for testing a man's powers of natural description by his handling of a snow-storm; and I remember the joy it gave me years ago to come upon this passage of our author:

"The snow fell with rigorous, relentless persistence; sometimes the wind made a sally and scattered it in flying vortices; sometimes there was a lull, and flake after flake descended out of the black night air, silent, circuitous, interminable. . . . The air was raw and pointed, but not far below freezing; and the flakes were large, damp, and adhesive. The whole city was sheeted up. An army might have marched from end to end and not a footfall given the alarm. If there were any belated birds in heaven they saw the island like a large white patch, and the bridges like slim white spars, on the black ground of the river."

But in the travel books, natural description is kept in due subordination to the proper study of mankind; and there, as in the moral essays, we find Stevenson acclaiming with joy man's "imperfect virtues," and calling upon everybody to take up the great task of being happy themselves and making others happy. Quotation would be an endless luxury; but one passage may be allowed which we may well believe seemed to its author the conclusion of the whole matter; certainly for himself:

"All who have meant good work with their whole hearts have done good work, although they may die before they have the time to sign it. Every heart that has beat strong and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind

it in the world, and bettered the tradition of mankind. And even if death catch people, like an open pitfall; and in mid career, laying out vast projects and planning monstrous foundations, flushed with hope and their mouths full of boastful language, they should be at once tripped up and silenced, is there not something brave and spirited in such a termination? and does not life go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than miserably straggling to an end in sandy deltas? When the Greeks made their fine saying that those whom the gods love die young, I cannot help believing they had this sort of death also in their eye. For surely at whatever age it overtakes the man, this is to die young. Death has not been suffered to take so much as an illusion from the heart. In the hottest of life, a tip-toe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound on to the other side. The noise of the mallet and chisel is scarcely quenched, the trumpets are hardly done blowing, when, trailing with him clouds of glory, this happy-starred, full-blooded spirit shoots into the spiritual land."

II

Eight more volumes of Stevenson in the Pentland Edition lie before us,* and call for a word of thanksgiving. Here are to be found the great romances, "Treasure Island," "Kidnapped," "Catriona," "The Master of Ballantrae," "Prince Otto"; here too, some of the masterpieces in little, "Thrawn Janet," "Will of the Mill," and "Markheim"; besides the biographical sketches and some other matters; food for many hours of delight to a multitude of young and old. On this large body of work the critics have long ago had their say, pointing out its beauties and defects, and assigning to its author his proper niche (relative to Sir Walter) in the Temple of Fame. The present writer cannot presume to sit in judgment on anybody; but as the pleasant task of welcoming this reprint has been assigned him, he cannot perform it better than by acknowledging the debt he himself owes to these admirable books, and making a few notes of admiration against his favourite passages.

And first we have Stevenson to thank for his many inventions. "With a tale forsooth he cometh to us, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner." And the tales all leave a good taste in the mouth. Fathers of families have been known to object to "Treasure Island" as a book for budding youth, on account of the extraordinary amount of blood splashed

* 1908.

up and down the story. Stevenson thought, no doubt, that he was catering for a quite legitimate taste for heroic exploit, which takes in youth the elementary and savage shape of blood-letting; and he did not realise that the greater verisimilitude of his own art made the colour he was so freely using something more than the red paint of the conventional buccaneering story. One wonders what reflections on this score passed through the mind of the author's Puritan father, when, as Mr. Gosse informs us, the chapters were read out to him, evening after evening, as they were composed. If he remonstrated, his son no doubt took credit to his buccaneers for their scrupulous attention to the third commandment, as some compensation for their breach of the sixth; and, after all, buccaneers must do something to show their quality. But allowing that the murders are too many and too gruesome, still how well the story goes. How interesting it is from start to finish! How well the excitement is varied, and how cleverly the climax is led up to! It would have amused and pleased Stevenson to know that his pirate story, within twenty-five years of its publication, had achieved that final *cachet* of a classic, the being made the subject of a schoolboy's examination. "Sketch the character of John Silver; by what other names was he known to his familiars? Give the context of the following sayings of his: (a) 'What's he doing with an echo to him?' (b) 'Dick was it? Then Dick can get to prayers.' (c) 'You're young, you are, but you're as smart as paint.' (d) 'Flint was cap'n; I was quartermaster, along of my timber leg.'" And the examiners are right; the genteel sea-cook is a careful study, and worth serious attention. As excellent, though more lightly sketched, is Captain Smollett, one of those silent men (Gotthold and Utterson are other examples) of whom Stevenson was fond. And all the buccaneers are, within their limits, carefully drawn, so that we are in no more danger of confusing Israel Hands with George Merry than either of them with Ben Gunn. For pure invention "Treasure Island" is as fine a piece of work as Stevenson ever did. At the head of another department of the romantic tale, that of which Wandering Willie's story in "Redgauntlet" is a reputed masterpiece, some would place "Thrawn Janet," others "Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." The latter suffers more than the former from the inevitable law that a tale of mystery, when the mystery is once known, must lose some of its interest. On the other hand, it has the advantage in moral suggestiveness,

and also in a more modern supernatural machinery. Perhaps one has to be born north of the Tweed to taste all the creepiness of Thrawn Janet; but everyone can appreciate the horribleness of Mr. Hyde, and the skilful difference, within the general likeness, of the impression he makes on the various characters in the story.

A second debt that we all owe to Stevenson is for not a few admirable dramatic pictures which have stamped themselves ineffaceably on the memory. Most of the romances, indeed, are a series of such scenes, more or less vivid, in the most important of which some critical action constitutes a *tableau*. The most vivid of all in my own mind is that scene in the vale of Glencoe, where David and Alan are lying flat on a high rock in the sun's eye, while the red-coats are moving lazily through the hot afternoon in search of them.

"The soldiers kept stirring all day in the bottom of the valley, now changing guard, now in patrolling parties hunting among the rocks. These lay round in so great a number, that to look for men among them was like looking for a needle in a bottle of hay! and being so hopeless a task, it was gone about with the less care. Yet we could see the soldiers pike their bayonets among the heather, which sent a cold thrill into my vitals; and they would sometimes hang about our rock, so that we scarce dread to breathe. It was in this way that I first heard the right English speech; one fellow as he went by actually clapping his hand upon the sunny face of the rock on which we lay, and plucking it off again with an oath. 'I tell you it's 'ot,' says he; and I was amazed at the clipping tones and the odd sing-song in which he spoke, and no less at that strange trick of dropping out the letter 'h.'"

Other scenes that will suggest themselves to everybody are the duel by candlelight in "The Master of Ballantrae," and the flinging of the guinea through the heraldic window in the same book. Indeed, the imagination of such incidents and their vivid portrayal was no small part of Stevenson's romantic art. The more successful of his stories move from picture to picture like a magic lantern. Where such pictures are lacking, as in the second part of "Catriona," the story flags. Stevenson has himself told us, in his "Gossip on Romance," how certain places made calls upon his fancy. "When I was a child I tried in vain to invent appropriate games for them, as I still try, just as vainly, to fit them with the proper story. Some places speak distinctly. Certain dank gardens cry aloud for a murder; certain old houses demand to be haunted; certain coasts are set apart for shipwreck. Other spots again seem to abide their destiny, suggestive and impenetrable, 'miching mallecho.'" And

then, as will be remembered, he goes on to instance "the inn at Burford Bridge, with its arbours and green garden and silent eddying river," "and the old Hawes Inn at the Queen's Ferry"; and continues, "I have lived both at the Hawes and Burford in a perpetual flutter, on the heels, as it seemed, of some adventure that should justify the place; but though the feeling had me to bed at night and called me again at morning in one unbroken round of pleasure and suspense, nothing befell me in either worth remark. The man or the hour had not yet come; but some day, I think, a boat shall put off from the Queen's Ferry, fraught with a dear cargo, and some frosty night a horseman, on a tragic errand, rattle with his whip upon the green shutters of the inn at Burford." This essay was written in 1882; four years later the boat put off with David Balfour on board; but the horseman still awaits incarnation.

Thirdly, we have to thank Stevenson for not a few friends, of various degrees in the social scale, but all pleasant companions. Best of all, perhaps, we know and like Mr. David Balfour (of Shaws). "David," said Stevenson, "is my own favourite, not for craftmanship, but for human niceness, in which I have been wanting hitherto." He was referring to the book, and not to the character, but the remark as to human niceness is true of the character. He naturally recalls Jim Hawkins; but Jim, though "nice," is too much the boy-hero, always under the limelight, whose very faults turn to the salvation of everybody; whereas David is quite "human." So is his friend Alan Breck. And so is the Edinburgh company to which he introduces us, notably Prestongrange and his clever daughter. Then again there is Prince Otto of Grunewald, who wins the sympathies of all the fair for his good looks and his misfortunes, and those of the self-conscious for his double portion of that moral malady. Some critics have been bold enough to say that the reason why these persons appeal so strongly to us is that they are all Stevenson himself in various fancy-dress. But to say that is to say what is obviously true up to a certain point, and beyond that obviously untrue. Every novelist and dramatist must speak through the lips of his characters, and he naturally chooses to put his own philosophy of life into the mouths of those persons with whom he is most in sympathy. And the converse holds also, that those persons, through whom the author himself speaks, will, Shakespeare always excepted, be more natural, and so more pleasing,

than those who depend more largely upon imagination. Prince Otto, for whatever reason, is certainly a living soul; but some of us may have had our suspicions as to whether it was really blood that issued when the Baron von Gondremark was pierced by the Queen's dagger.

The essays which some persons prefer to the romances, are confined to those collected together as "Memories and Portraits," in this series of volumes. They include a certain amount of biographical and autobiographical work, full of interest to every Stevensonian, the "Gossip on Romance," referred to above, a "Humble Remonstrance" which contains an interesting criticism of "Treasure Island," and the famous essay on "A College Magazine," in which Stevenson let us into the secret, much as conjurers do, of how he learned to write, namely, by photographing scenery, as Tennyson called it, and by "aping" any quality that impressed him in any writer. This indefatigable imitation (added to natural genius) no doubt resulted in that great variety of turns of phrase by which Stevenson's style is distinguished; but had it not also the result of imparting a certain want of repose to his style, the suggestion of an audience, which haunts the essays, and is only got rid of when the romancer is well on the war-path? And yet no one would have the essays other than they are.

TO PROSPERO AT SAMOA

By Y. Y.

A world away in dreams we roam—
  The tempest howls, the lightnings fall;
Slim rainbows span the leaping foam
  That shatters on your fortress wall;
Yet forth to shipwreck would we go
To be the guests of Prospero:

To join your court where glints the blue
  Through frets of lank banana fans—
Mirandas, but of warmer hue,
  And other, lazier Calibans,
And beaded Ariel-eyes that glow
To list the tale of Prospero.

They stoop from sultry southern stars,
  They rise from yonder Peaceful Sea,
The sprites you bind in mystic bars
  On Fancy's page, your thralls, as we.
A dream!—we wake, and falling snow
Hides Treasure Isle and Prospero.

Then flash us tidings of your weal!
  Bid Ariel tread the ocean floor,
And fire-fed dragons, ribbed with steel,
  Rush treasure-freighted to our shore
With tales of mingled mirth and woe,
The magic scroll of Prospero!

1892.

From a painting by W. Hatherell in "Robert Louis Stevenson." Days with Great Writers series. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

"SHE STOOD ON THE BULWARKS AND HELD ON BY A STAY, THE WIND BLOWING IN HER PETTICOATS.'

Catriona.

National Portrait Gallery.

R. L. STEVENSON.
A Sketch, painted in one sitting
by Sir W. B. Richmond, R.A.

From "Stevenson's Shrine," by Laura Stubbs.
(De La More Press.)

THE STAIRCASE, VAILIMA.

"My house is a great place we have a hall fifty feet long, with a great redwood stair ascending from it, where we dine in state."—To George Meredith.

"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

By courtesy of Messrs. Cassell.

MRS. ISOBEL STRONG,
Stevenson's Step-Daughter.

From "Stevenson's Works." Swanston Edition.
(Chatto & Windus.)

R. L. S. IN APEMAMA ISLAND. A DEVIL PRIEST MAKING INCANTATIONS.

From "Stevenson's Works." Swanston Edition.
(Chatto & Windus.)

THE BACK VERANDAH AT VAILIMA.

From "Stevenson's Works." Swanston Edition.
(Chatto & Windus.)

R. L. S. SPEARING A FISH IN THE BOW OF
THE SCHOONER "EQUATOR."

Photo by J. Patrick, Edinburgh.

STEVENSON'S FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD AT SAMOA,
INCLUDING HIS WIFE, HIS MOTHER, AND LLOYD OSBOURNE.

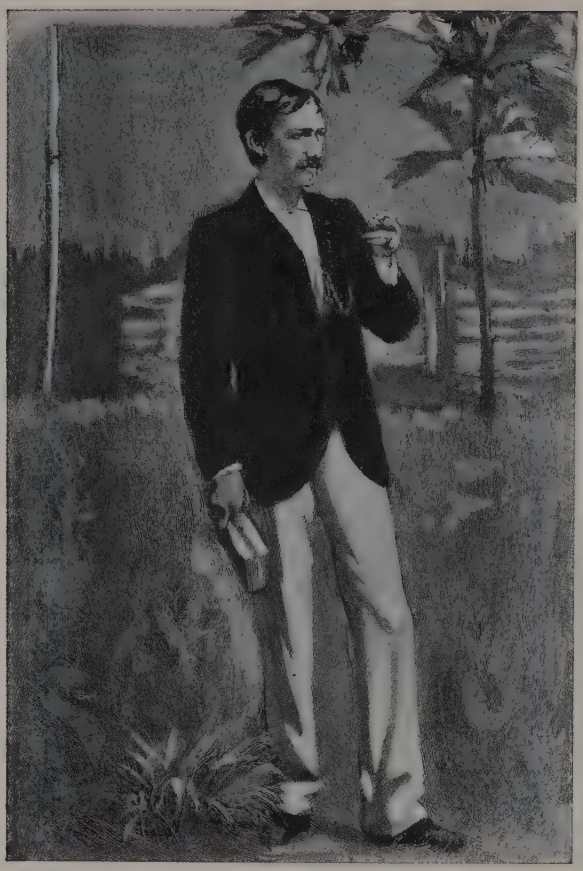
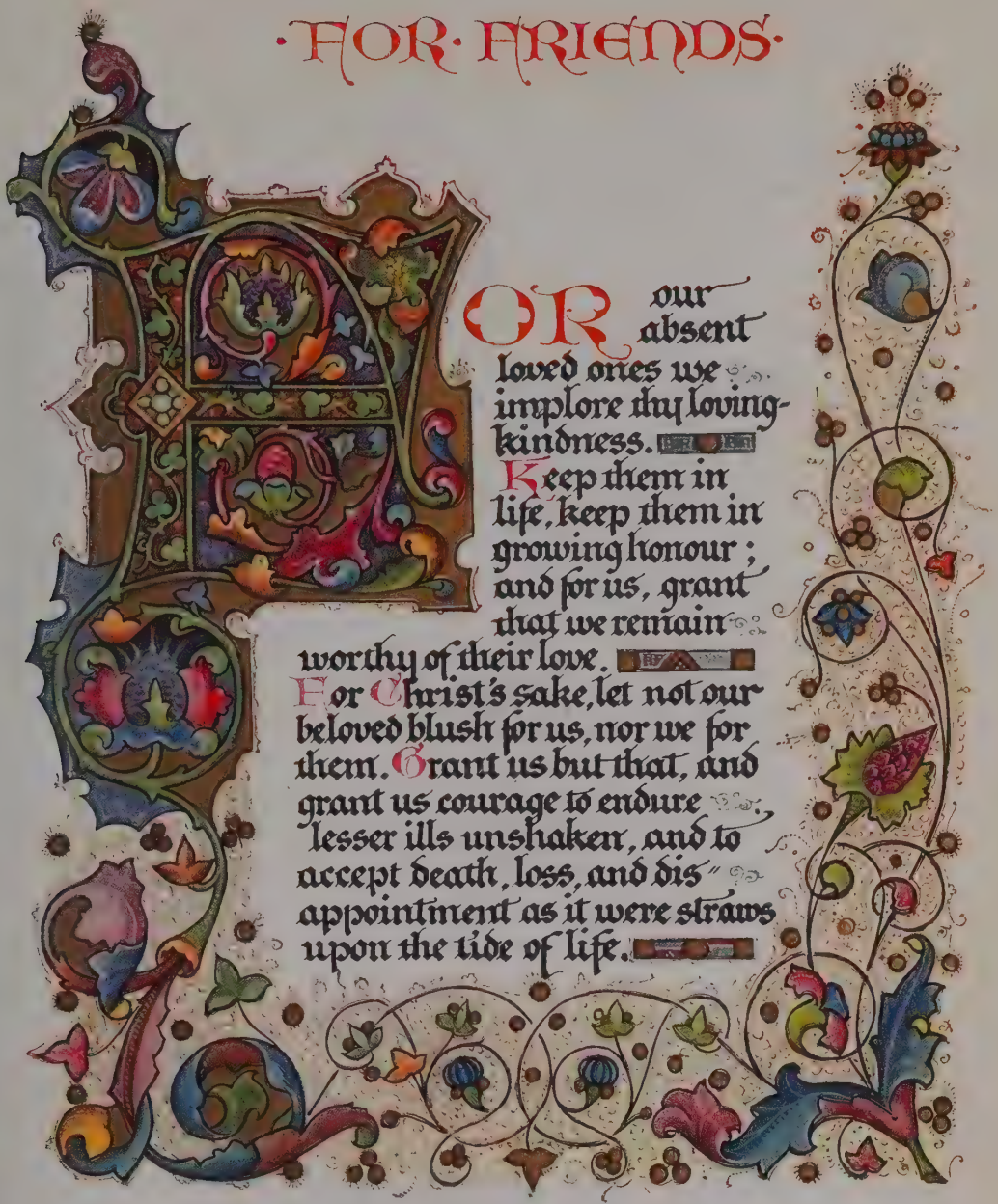


Photo by J. Davis, Apia, Samoa.

STEVENSON AT VAILIMA.

·FOR· FRIENDS·


FOR our absent loved ones we implore thy loving-kindness. Keep them in life, keep them in growing honour; and for us, grant that we remain worthy of their love. For Christ's sake, let not our beloved blush for us, nor we for them. Grant us but that, and grant us courage to endure lesser ills unshaken, and to accept death, loss, and disappointment as it were straws upon the tide of life.

From "Prayers Written at Vailima." Edition de Luxe with illuminations by Alberto Sangorski. (Chatto and Windus.)

STEVENSON'S PRAYER FOR FRIENDS.

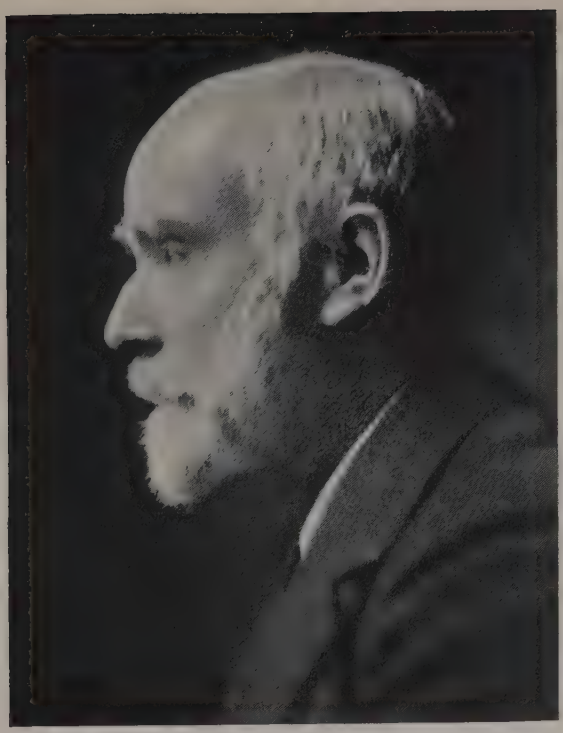


Photo by E. O. Hoppé.

SIR SIDNEY COLVIN.

"To other lands and nights my fancy turned—
To London first, and chiefly to your house,
The many-pillared and the well-beloved.
There yearning fancy lighted; there again
In the upper room I lay, and heard far off
The unsleeping city murmur like a shell. . . .
Again I longed for the returning morn,
The awakening traffic, the bestirring birds
. . . . . Most of all
For your light foot I wearied, and your knock
That was the glad réveillé of my day."

"To S. C." Stevenson's "Poems." (Chatto & Windus.)

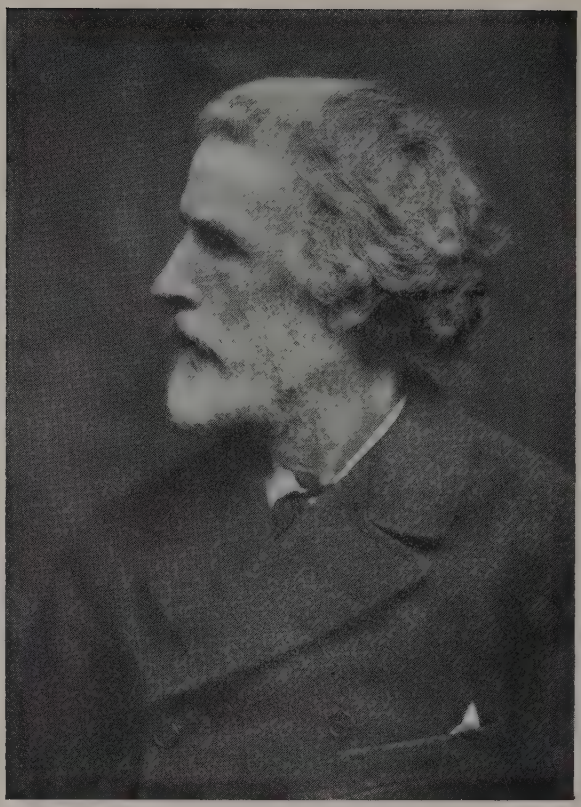


Photo by Messrs. Thomson,
Grosvenor Studios, New Bond Street.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

"I hear we may soon expect *The Amazing Marriage*. . . . Now, in so far as you have adhered to your intention, Gower Woodseer will be a family portrait, age twenty-five, of the highly respectable and slightly influential and fairly aged *Tusitala*. . . . I suppose we shall never see each other again . . . I shall never see whether you have grown older, and you shall never deplore that Gower Woodseer should have declined into the pantaloon *Tusitala*. It is perhaps better so. Let us continue to see each other as we were, and accept, my dear Meredith, my love and respect."—1894.

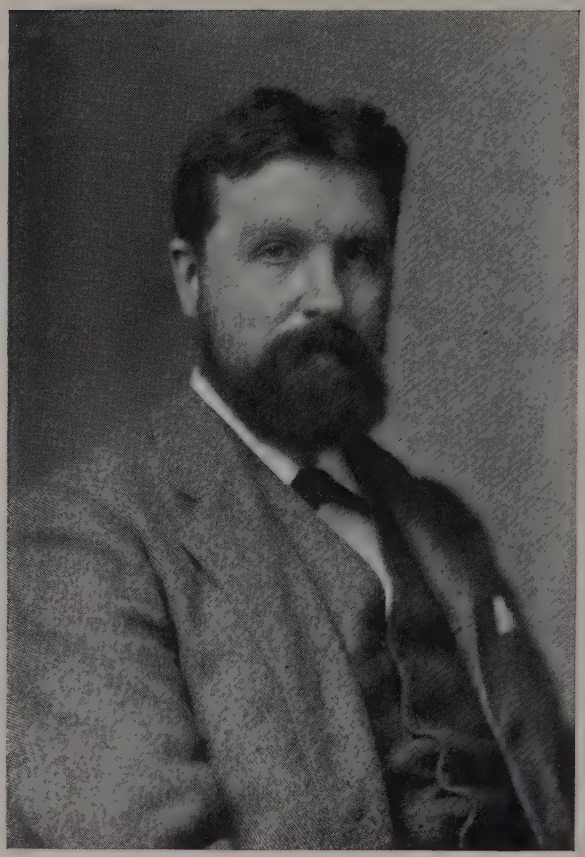
"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

Photo by Elliott & Fry.

W. E. HENLEY.

"It is impossible to let your new volume pass in silence. I have not received the same thrill of poetry since G. M.'s *Joy of Earth* volume and *Love in a Valley*; and I do not know that even that was so intimate and deep. . . . I did not guess you were so great a magician."—To W. E. Henley.

"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin (Methuen.)



Photo, by Elliott & Fry. S. R. CROCKETT.

"I detected you early in the *Bookman*, which I usually see. . . . I shall never set my foot again upon the heather. Here I am until I die, and here will I be buried."—To S. R. Crockett.

"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

Photo by G. C. Beresford.

SIR J. M. BARRIE.

"I am proud to think you are a Scotchman. . . . There are two of us now that the Shirra might have patted on the head. And please do not think when I thus seem to bracket myself with you that I am wholly blinded with vanity. Jess is beyond my frontier line; I could not touch her skirt; I have no such glamour of twilight in my pen. I am a capable artist; but it begins to look to me as if you were a man of genius."—To J. M. Barrie.

"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

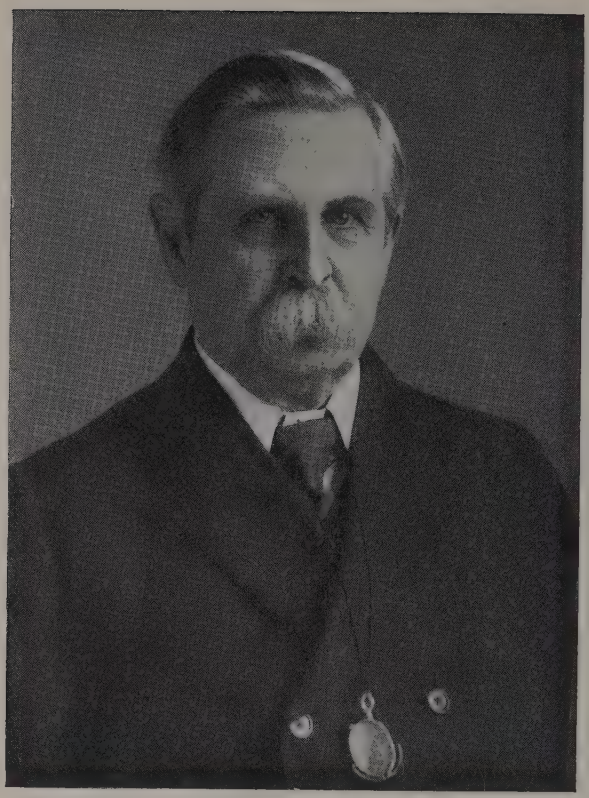


Photo by Elliott & Fry.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

I conceive the kingdom of the Muses milder mannered; and in particular that country which you administer and which I seem to see as a half-suburban land; a land of hollyhocks and country houses: a land where at night, in stony and sequestered byraths, you will meet masqueraders going to a ball in their sedans, and the rector steering homewards by the light of his lantern."—To Austin Dobson.

"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

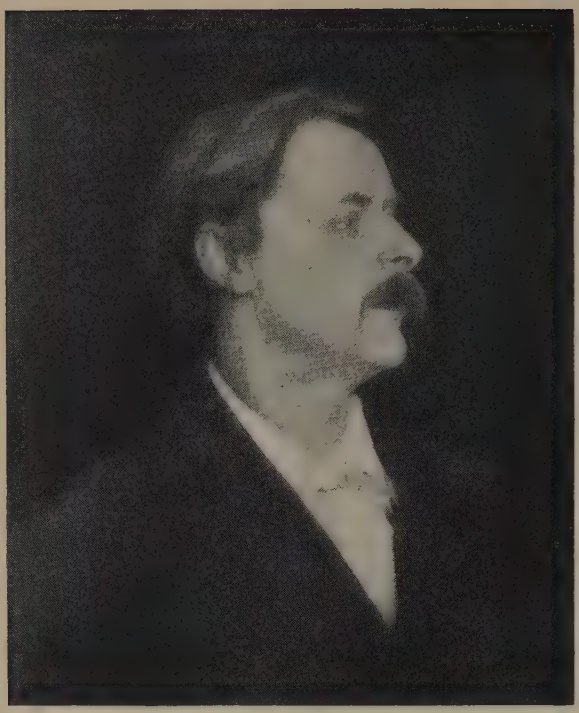
Photo by Alvin Langdon Coburn.

Reproduced from "Roderick Hudson," by Henry James. (Macmillan.)

HENRY JAMES.

"Hurry up with another book of stories. I am now reduced to two of my contemporaries, you and Barrie—O, and Kipling—you and Barrie and Kipling are now my Muses Three."—To Henry James.

"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)



From a Painting by J. S. Sargent, R.A.
Painted in 1886.

EDMUND GOSSE, C.B.

"Well, my dear Gosse, here's wishing you all health and prosperity. . . . May you live long, since it seems as if you would continue to enjoy life. May you write many more books as good as this one—only there's one thing impossible, you can never write another dedication that can give the same pleasure to the vanished *Tusitala*."—To Edmund Gosse. Stevenson's last letter—written two days before his death.

"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

SCOTLAND'S LAMENT . .

IN MEMORIAM . . . .

R. L. S.: IN MEMORIAM . .

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON .

STEVENSON'S BOOKS . .

HOME FROM THE HILL . .

SCOTLAND'S LAMENT*

By Sir J. M. Barrie

HER hands upon her brows are pressed,
She goes upon her knees to pray,
Her head is bowed upon her breast,
And, oh, she's sairly failed the day.

Her breast is old, it will not rise,
Her tearless sobs in anguish choke,
God put His finger on her eyes,
And then it was her tears that spoke.

"I've ha'en o' brawer sons a flow,
My Walter mair renown could win,
And he that followed at the plough,
But Louis was my Benjamin.

"Ye sons wha do your little best,
Ye writing Scots, put by the pen,
He's deid, the ane abune the rest,
I winna look at write again.

"It's sune the leave their childhood drap,
I've ill to ken them, gaen sae grey,
But aye he climbed intil my lap,
Or pu'd my coats to make me play.

"He egged me on wi' mirth and prank,
We hangit gowans on a string,
We made the doakens walk the plank,
We mairit snails withoot the ring.

"'I'm auld,' I pant, 'sic ploys to mak,
To games your mither shouldna stoup,'
'You're gey and aul',' he cries me back,
'That's fou I like to gar you loup!'

* All rights reserved. First published in The Bookman, January, 1895.

" O' thae bit ploys he made sic books,
A' mithers cam to watch us playing ;
I feignèd no to heed their looks,
But fine I kent what they was saying !

" At times I lent him for a game
To north and south and east and west,
But no for lang, he sune cam hame,
For here it was he played the best.

" And when he had to cross the sea
He wouldna lat his een grow dim,
He bravely dree'd his weird for me,
I tried to do the same for him.

" Ahint his face his pain was sair,
Ahint hers grat his waefu' mither,
We kent that we should meet nae mair,
The ane saw easy thro' the ither.

" For lang I've watched wi' trem'ling lip,
But Louis ne'er sin syne I've seen,
The greedy island keept its grip,
The cauldriff oceans rolled atween.

" He's deid, the ane abune the rest,
Oh, wae, the mither left alane !
He's deid, the ane I loo'ed the best,
Oh, mayna I hae back my nain ! "

Her breast is old it will not rise,
Her tearless sobs in anguish choke,
God put his finger on her eyes,
It was her tears alone that spoke.

Now out the lights went stime by stime,
The towns crept closer round the kirk,
Now all the firths were smored in rime,
Lost winds went wailing thro' the mirk.

A star that shot across the night
  Struck fire on Pala's mourning head,
And left for aye a steadfast light,
  By which the mother guards her dead.

"The lad was mine!" Erect she stands,
  No more by vain regrets oppress't,
Once more her eyes are clear; her hands
  Are proudly crossed upon her breast.

IN MEMORIAM

By Ian Maclaren

WHEN one came in with omens of sadness on his face and told us that Stevenson was dead, each man had a sense of personal bereavement. None of us had ever seen him, save one—and that was long ago; none of us had ever read a letter of his writing, save one—and he ransacked his memory for the least word. We had no "eagle's feather" to show; there was nothing between this man and us save the mystical tie that binds a writer and his readers in the kingdom of letters. He had led us in through the ivory gate, and shown us things eye hath not seen; and all his service had been given at a great cost of suffering. Filled with the enthusiasm of his art, he beat back death time after time, and only succumbed like J. R. Green and Symonds, his brethren in letters and affliction, after he had achieved imperishable fame, "monumentum aere perennius."

Stevenson had not to complain, with Sir Thomas More, that readers of books were so "unkind and ungenteel that though they take great pleasure and delectation in the work, yet, for all that, they cannot find in their hearts to love the author thereof"; for though he was exiled from his native land, yet he lived in the heart of every reading man, not only because he was a great writer, but also because he was a bright soul with faith in God and man.

Fourteen years ago our author laid down in the *Fortnightly Review* the "two duties incumbent on any man who enters on the business of writing—truth to the fact and a good spirit in the treatment." One dares to say without rebuke to-day, that he fulfilled his own conditions, for he saw life whole and he wrote of it with sympathy. He brought also to his task a delicate genius, which gave him an almost solitary place. It was difficult to name a living artist in words that could be compared with him who reminded us at every turn of Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt. There are certain who compel words to serve them and never travel without an imperial body guard; but words waited on Stevenson like "nimble servitors," and he went where he pleased in his simplicity because everyone flew to anticipate his wishes. His style had the thread of gold, and he was the perfect type of the man of letters—a humanist whose Greek joy in the beautiful was annealed to a fine purity by his Scottish faith; whose kinship was not with Boccacio and Rabelais, but with Dante and Spenser. His was the Magical touch than no man can explain or acquire; it belongs to those only who have drunk at the Pierian spring. There is a place at the marriage feast for every honest writer, but we judge that our master will go to the high table and sit down with Virgil and Shakespeare and Goethe and Scott.

The mists of his native land and its wild traditions passed into his blood so that he was at home in two worlds. In one book he would analyse human character with such weird power that the reader shudders because a stranger has been within his soul; in another he hurries you along a breathless story of adventure till your imagination fails from exhaustion. Never did he weary us with the pedantry of modern problems. Nor did he dally with foul vices to serve the ends of purity. Nor did he feed

> "A gibing spirit
> Whose influence is begot of that loose grace
> Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools."

One subject he approached late in his work, but we are thankful he has at least given us Barbara Grant and Catriona. What he might have done one can only imagine, who expected another Portia from his hands. He was buried far from the land he loved, but they chose his grave well, on the mountain top, and his funeral has been described already, save that his disciples were not there.

"'This man decided not to live, but know;
Bury this man there?'
'Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects;
Loftily lying
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying.'"

R. L. S.
IN MEMORIAM *

By Austin Dobson

These to his memory. May the age arriving,
As ours, recall
That bravest heart, that gay and gallant striving,
That laurelled pall!

Blithe and rare spirit! We, who later linger
By bleaker seas,
Sigh for the touch of the Magician's finger,
His golden keys!

* Dedication of the New Century number of the *Edinburgh University Magazine*, January, 1901.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

By Sir W. Robertson Nicoll

WHILE we are all waiting with interest and expectation for Mr. Graham Balfour's "Life of Robert Louis Stevenson,"* it may be worthwhile to consider where Stevenson stands now. As the years pass they disengage the virtue of a writer, and decide whether or not he has force enough to live. Will Stevenson live? Undoubtedly. He is far more secure of immortality than many very popular writers. The sale of his books may not be great, and he may even disappear from the marts of literature now and then, but he will always be revived, and it may turn out that his reputation will wear as well as that of Charles Lamb. For he engages his readers by the double gift of personality and style.

The personality of Stevenson is strangely arresting. In the first place it was a double personality. In his journey to the Cevennes he reflects that every one of us travels about with a donkey. In his "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," the donkey becomes a devil. Every Jekyll is haunted by his Hyde. Somebody said that "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" showed Stevenson as Poe, with the addition of a moral sense. Critics may differ as to the exact literary value of the famous little book, but as an expression of Stevenson's deepest thought about life it will retain its interest. He was not content to dwell in a world where the lines are drawn clear, where the sheep are separated from the goats. He would have a foot in both worlds, content to dwell neither wholly with the sheep, nor wholly with the goats. No doubt his ruling interest was in ethical problems and he could be stern in his moral judgments, as, for example, in his discussion of the character of Burns. He was by nature and training religious, "something of the Shorter Catechist." His earliest publication was a defence of the Covenanters, and in his last days he established close friendships with the

* 1901.

Samoan missionaries. Yet he was by no means "orthodox," either in ethics or in religion. Much as he wrote on conduct, there were certain subjects, and these the most difficult, on which he never spoke out. On love, for example, and all that goes with it, it is quite certain that he never spoke his full mind—to the public at least.

Another very striking quality in his personality was his fortitude. He was simply the bravest of men. Now and then, as in his letter to George Meredith, he lets us see under what disabling conditions he fought his battle. Human beings in a world like this are naturally drawn to one who suffers and will not let himself be mastered or corrupted by suffering. They do not care for the prosperous, dominant, athletic, rich and long-lived man. They may conjecture, indeed, that behind all the bravery there is much hidden pain, but if it is not revealed to them they cannot be sure. They love Charles Lamb for the manner in which he went through his trial, and they love him none the less because he was sometimes overborne, because on occasions he stumbled and fell. Charlotte Brontë was an example of fortitude as remarkable as Stevenson, but she was not brave after the same manner. She allowed the clouds to thicken over her life and make it grey. Stevenson sometimes found himself in the dust, but he recovered and rose up to speak fresh words of cheer. He took thankfully and eagerly whatever life had to offer him in the way of affection, of kindness, of admiration. Nor did he ever in any trouble lose his belief that the Heart of things was kind. In the face of all obstacle he went steadily on with his work, nor did he ever allow himself to fall below the best that he could do. An example so touching, so rare, so admirable, is a reinforcement which weary humanity cannot spare.

With these qualities, and, indeed, as their natural result, Stevenson had a rare courtesy. He was, in the words of the old Hebrew song, "lovely and pleasant," or rather, as Robertson Smith translated it, "lovely and winsome," in all his bearings to men of all kinds, so long as they did not fall under the condemnation of his moral judgment. With a personality so rich, Stevenson had the power of communicating himself. He could reveal his personality without egotism, without offence. Many writers of charming individuality cannot show themselves in their books. There is as little of themselves in their novels as there would be in a treatise on mathematics, if they could write it. Perhaps less. There

have been mathematicians like Augustus de Morgan, who could put humour and personality into a book on geometry.

But Stevenson had not only a personality, he had a style. His golden gift of words can never be denied. He may sometimes have been too "precious," but the power of writing as he could write is so uncommon that he must always stand with a very few. We believe that Stevenson's style is largely an expression of his courtesy. He wished as a matter of mere politeness and goodwill to express himself as well as he could. In fact, it was this courtesy that led him to his famous paradox about the end of art, his characterisation of the artist as the Son of Joy. "The French have a romantic evasion for one employment, and call its practitioners the Daughters of Joy. The artist is of the same family; he is of the Sons of Joy, chooses his trade to please himself, gains his livelihood by pleasing others, and has parted with something of the sterner dignity of man." The theory that all art is decoration cannot be seriously considered. It was certainly not true of Stevenson's art. He wished to please, but he had other and higher ends. He had to satisfy his exacting conscience, and he obeyed its demands sincerely and righteously, and to the utmost of his power. But he was too good a man to be satisfied even with that. Milton put into all his work the most passionate labour, but he did not believe that pleasure was the end of art. Nor would he have been satisfied by complying with his conscience. He had a message to deliver, and he delivered it in the most effective forms at his command. Stevenson had his message too, and uttered it right memorably. If the message had to be put in a few words, they would be these: *Good, my soul, be brave!* He was bold enough to call Tennyson a Son of Joy, but he would have assented with all his soul to Tennyson's lines:

> "And here the singer for his art
> Not all in vain may plead;
> The song that nerves the nation's heart
> Is in itself a deed."

STEVENSON'S BOOKS

By S. R. Crockett

AUTHOR'S NOTE

R. L. S.

Sitting alone by the sea in the mid days of November, I wrote a little article on what I loved most in the works of Robert Louis Stevenson, and it was set in type for the January Bookman. In itself a thing of no value, it pleased me to think that in his far island my friend would read it, and that it might amuse him. I have tried and failed to revise it in the gloom of the night that has come so swiftly to those who loved him. It would not do.

How could one alter and amend the light sentences with the sense of loss in one's heart? How sit down to write a "tribute" when one has slept, and started, and awaked all night with the dull ache that lies below Sleep saying all the time, "Stevenson is dead! Stevenson is dead!"?

It is true also that I have small right to speak of him. I was little to him; but then he was very much to me. He alone of mankind saw what pleased him in a little book of boyish verses.

Seven years ago he wrote to tell me so. He had a habit of quoting stray lines from it in successive letters to let me see that he remembered what he had praised. Yet he was ever as modest and brotherly as if I had been the great author and he the lad writing love verses to his sweetheart.

Without reproach and without peer in friendship, our king-over-the-water stood first in our hearts because his own was full of graciousness and tolerance and chivalry.

I let my little article be just as I wrote it for his eye to see, before any of us guessed that the dread hour was so near the sounding which should call our well beloved "home from the hill."

S. R. Crockett.

Penicuik, Midlothian.
December 19th, 1894.

IN sunny Samoa, more thousands of miles away than the ungeographical can count, sits "The Scot Abroad." For thus Burton, the historian, sane, sage, and wise, wrote of Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson before his time. It is the wont of Scotland that her sons, for adventure or merchandise, should early expatriate themselves. The ships of the world in all seas are engineered from the Clyde, and a "doon-the-watter" accent is considered as necessary as lubricating oil, in order that the plunging piston rods may really enjoy their rhythmic dance. If you step ashore anywhere "east of Suez and the Ten Commandments," ten to one the first man of your tongue who greets you will hail in the well-remembered accent of the Scotch gardener who chased you out of the strawberry plots of your unblessed youth.

But to us who "stop at home, on flowery beds of ease," made aware of ourselves only when the east wind blows and we think that we are back in St. Andrews, the typical "Scot Abroad" is neither Burton's Gentleman Companion at Arms nor the oily chief engineer, but Mr. Stevenson.

On high in a cool bowery room on the hillside, looking down on the league-long rollers forming themselves to be hurled on the shore, sits one with his heels on the coco-matting of Samoa, but his head over the Highland border. The chiefs gather for palaver (or whatever they are pleased to call hunkering-and-blethering out there), and they tell the Tale-teller of heads taken and plantations raided. And he stays his pen and arbitrates, or he "leaves for the front," as though he were plenipotentiary of the Triple Alliance. But all the while it is James More Macgregor who is marching out arrayed in a breech-clout and a Winchester "to plunder and to ravish"—or carry off an heiress lass from the lowlands, as was good Macgregor use-and-wont.

They call the beautiful new complete "Stevenson" which Mr. Sidney Colvin and Mr. Charles Baxter have contrived and organised, the "Edinburgh" edition, because though the stars of the tropics glow like beacons, and in Apia the electric light winks a-nights like glow-worms amid a wilderness of green leaves, yet to the lad who sits aloft there are still "no stars like the Edinburgh street lamps." But my own local enthusiasms are duller, for the last night I was in Edinburgh I saw a wind (Rajputana and Edinburgh are the only two places where you can see wind)—I saw a wind, with the bit between its teeth, run off with itself down that romantic wall of hotels, which in the night looks like the thunder-

battered wall of the dungeon of Buchan. I saw it snatch out a dozen gaps in the converging perspective of the gas-lamps, and bring down the chimney-cans clashing on the pavement like forest leaves in a November blast. So Mr. Stevenson, who does not live there, " for love and euphony " names his collected edition (to which be all good luck and fostering breezes) " The Edinburgh Edition." I have just seen the first volume, which in its brightness and beauty seems a summary of all the perfections, and whose print recalls that in which the early novels of Scott were set up. Mr. Hole's portrait suffers a little from the excessive size of the hands, but in spite of this is by far the most characteristic and Stevensonian portrait ever done, and represents him exactly as his friends remember him at the most productive period his genius has yet known.

To me the most interesting thing in Mr. Stevenson's books is always Mr. Stevenson himself. Some authors (perhaps the greatest) severely sit with the more ancient gods, and serenely keep themselves out of their books. Most of these authors are dead now. Others put their personalities in, indeed ; but would do much better to keep them out. Their futilities and pomposities, pose as they may, are no more interesting than those of the chairman of a prosperous limited company. But there are a chosen few who cannot light a cigarette or part their hair in a new place without being interesting. Upon such, in this life, interviewers bear down in shoals with pencils pointed like spears ; and about them as soon as they are dead—lo ! begins at once the " chatter about Harriet."

Mr. Stevenson is of this company. Rarest of all, his friends have loved and praised him so judiciously that he has no enemies. He might have been the spoiled child of letters. He is only " all the world's Louis." The one unforgiveable thing in a chequered past is that at one time he wore a black shirt, to which we refuse to be reconciled on any terms.

But when he writes of himself, how supremely excellent is the reading. It is good even when he does it intentionally, as in " Memories and Portraits." It is better still when he sings it, as in his " Child's Garden." He is irresistible to every lonely child who reads and thrills, and reads again to find his past recovered for him with effortless ease. It is a book never long out of my hands, for only in it and in my dreams when I am touched with fever, do I grasp the long,

long thoughts of a lonely child and a hill-wandering boy—thoughts I never told to any; yet which Mr. Stevenson tells over again to me as if he read them off a printed page.

I am writing at a distance from books and collections of Stevensoniana, so that I cannot quote, but only vaguely follow the romancer through some of his incarnations. Of course every romancer, consciously or unconsciously, incarnates himself, especially if he writes his books in the first person. It is he who makes love to the heroine; he who fights with the Frenchman "who never can win"; he who climbs the Mountain Perilous with a dirk between his teeth.

But Mr. Stevenson writes the fascination of his personality into all his most attractive creations, and whenever I miss the incarnation, I miss most of the magic as well. Jim Hawkins is only "the Lantern Bearer" of North Berwick Links translated into the language of adventure on the high seas—the healthier also for the change. I love Jim Hawkins. On my soul I love him more even than Alan Breck. He is the boy we should all like to have been, though no doubt David Balfour is much more like the boys we were—without the piety and the adventures. I read Stevenson in every line of "Treasure Island." It is of course mixed of Erraid and the island discovered by Mr. Daniel Defoe. But we love anything of such excellent breed, and the crossing only improves it. Our hearts dance when Mr. Stevenson lands his cut-throats, with one part of himself as hero and the other as villain. John Silver is an admirable villain, for he is just the author genially cutting throats. Even when he pants three times as he sends the knife home, we do not entirely believe in his villainy. We expect to see the murdered seaman about again and hearty at his meals in the course of a chapter or two. John is a villain at great expense and trouble to himself; but we like him personally, and are prepared to sit down and suck an apple with him, even when he threatens to stove in our "thundering old blockhouse and them as dies will be the lucky ones." In our hearts we think the captain was a little hard on him. We know that it is Mr. Stevenson all the time, and are terrified exactly like a three-year-old who sees his father take a rug over his head and "be a bear." The thrill is delicious, for there is just an off-chance that after all the thing may turn out to be a bear; but still we are pretty easy that at the play's end the bearskin will be tossed aside, the villain repent, and John Silver get off with a comfortable tale of pieces of eight.

No book has charted more authentically the topographical features of the kingdom of Romance than "Treasure Island." Is that island in the South or in the North Atlantic? Is it in the "Spanish Main"? What *is* the Spanish Main? Is it in the Atlantic at all? Or set a jewel somewhere in the wide Pacific, or strung on some fringe of the Indian Ocean? Who knows or cares? Jim Hawkins is there. His luck, it is true, is something remarkable. His chances are phenomenal. His imagination, like ours, is running free, and we could go on for ever hearing about Jim. We can trust Jim Hawkins, and void of care we follow his star.

O for one hour of Jim in "The Wrecker" to clear up the mystery of the many captains, or honest and reputable John Silver to do for the poor Scot down below in a workman-like manner when he came running to him, instead of firing as it were "into the brown" till that crying stopped—a touch for which we find it hard to forgive Mr. Stevenson—pardon, Mr. Lloyd Osbourne.

Again, Alan Breck is ever Alan, and bright shines his sword; but he is never quite Jim Hawkins to me. Nor does he seem even so point-device in "Catriona" as he was in the round house or with his foot on the heather. But wherever Alan Breck goes or David Balfour follows, thither I am ready to fare forth, unquestioning and all-believing.

But when I do not care very much for any one of Mr. Stevenson's books, it is chiefly the lack of Mr. James Hawkins that I regret. Jim in doublet and hose—how differently he would have sped "The Black Arrow"! Jim in trousers and top hat—he would never have been found in the "Wrong Box," never have gone out with Huish upon the "Ebb Tide." John Silver never threw vitriol, but did his needs with a knife in a gentlemanly way, and that was because Jim Hawkins was there to see that he was worthy of himself. Jim would never have let things get to such a pass as to require Attwater's bullets splashing like hail in a pond over the last two pages to settle matters in any sort of way.

I often think of getting up a petition to Mr. Stevenson (it is easy to get around Robin), beseeching "with sobs and tears" that he will sort out all his beach-combers and Yankee captains, charter a rakish saucy-sailing schooner, ship Jim Hawkins as ship's boy or captain (we are not particular), and then up anchor with a Yo-Ho-Cheerily for the Isle of our Heart's Desire, where they load Long Toms with pieces of eight, and, dead or alive, nobody minds Ben Gunn.

HOME FROM THE HILL*

By Sir W. Robertson Nicoll

"Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill."—R. L. S.

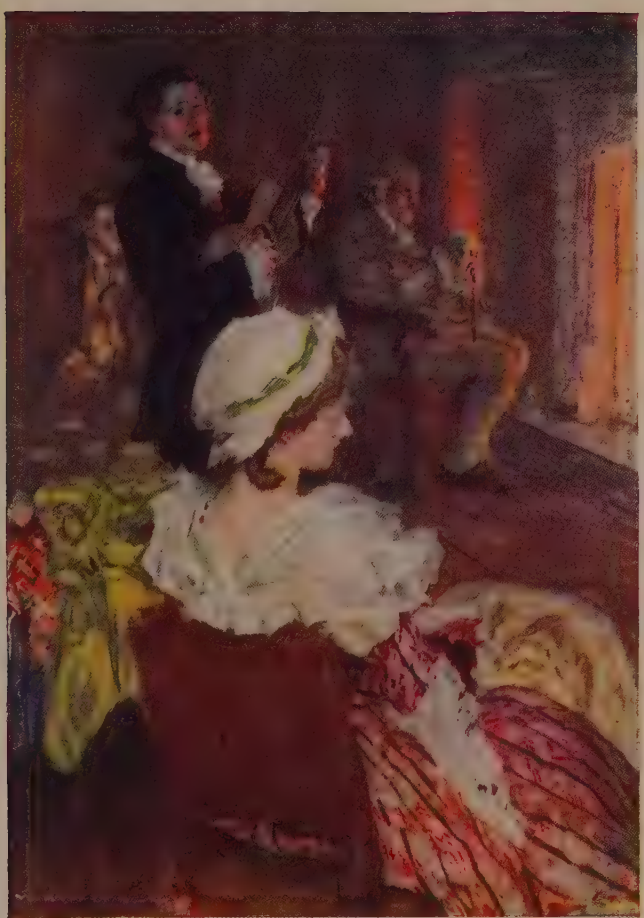
LET the weary body lie
Where he chose its grave,
'Neath the wide and starry sky,
By the Southern wave,
While the island holds her trust
And the hill keeps faith,
Through the watches that divide
The long night of death.

But the spirit free from thrall,
Now goes forth of these
To its birthright, and inherits
Other lands and seas:
We shall find him when we seek him
In an older home,—
By the hills and streams of childhood
'Tis his weird to roam.

In the fields and woods we hear him
Laugh and sing and sigh;
Or where by the Northern breakers
Sea-birds troop and cry;
Or where over lonely moorlands
Winter winds fly fleet;
Or by sunny graves he hearkens
Voices low and sweet.

We have lost him, we have found him:
Mother, he was fain
Nimbly to retrace his footsteps;
Take his life again
To the breast that first had warmed it,
To the tried and true,—
He has come, our well belovèd,
Scotland, back to you!

* First published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, February, 1895. Reprinted by kind permission of Messrs. Blackwood.



From a painting by W. Hatherell.
Hodder and Stoughton.)

"THE WORDS AND MUSIC SEEMED TO POUR OUT OF HIS OWN HEART AND HIS OWN PAST AND TO BE AIMED DIRECTLY AT MRS. HENRY."

The Master of Ballantrae

From a bas-relief made during Stevenson's illness in 1887.

STEVENSON.

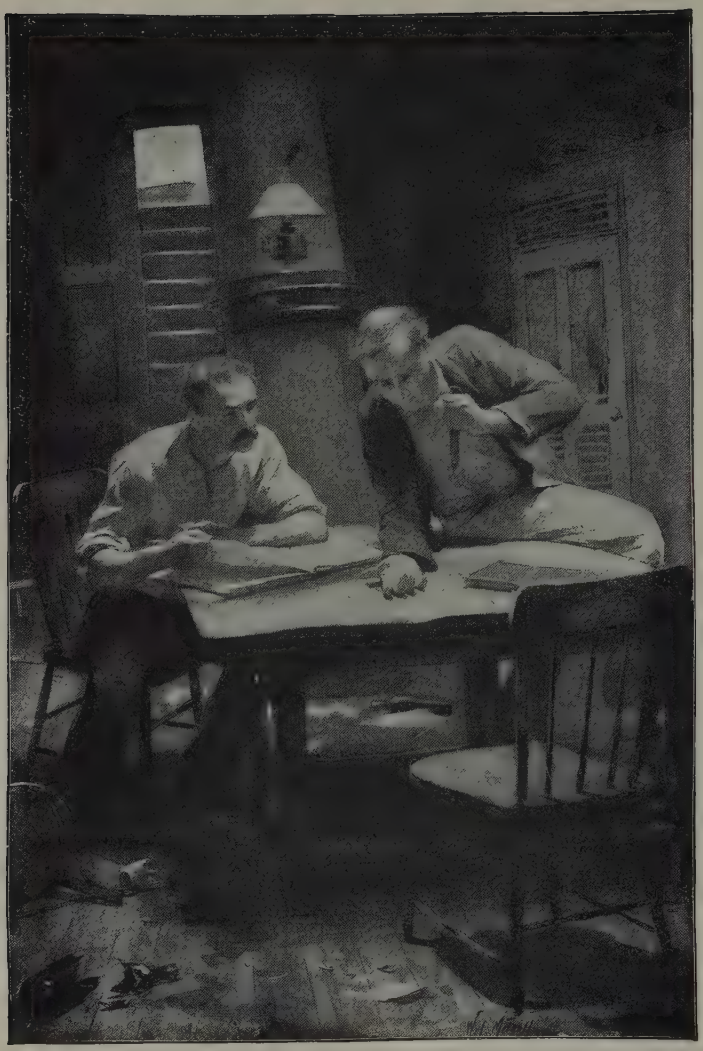
Bronze medallion by St. Gaudens in the Luxembourg.

Photo by Arch. Matthews, Motherwell.

BRAFIELD HOUSE, LANARK.
Birthplace of Robert Macqueen (1722), the famous Lord Justice Brafield, the original of Stevenson's "Weir of Hermiston."

By courtesy of Messrs. Cassell.

STEVENSON IN HIS STUDY AT VAILIMA,
DICTATING TO MRS. STRONG.



From "The Wrecker." (Cassell.)

"THAT KIND OF ACCIDENT," SAID HE.

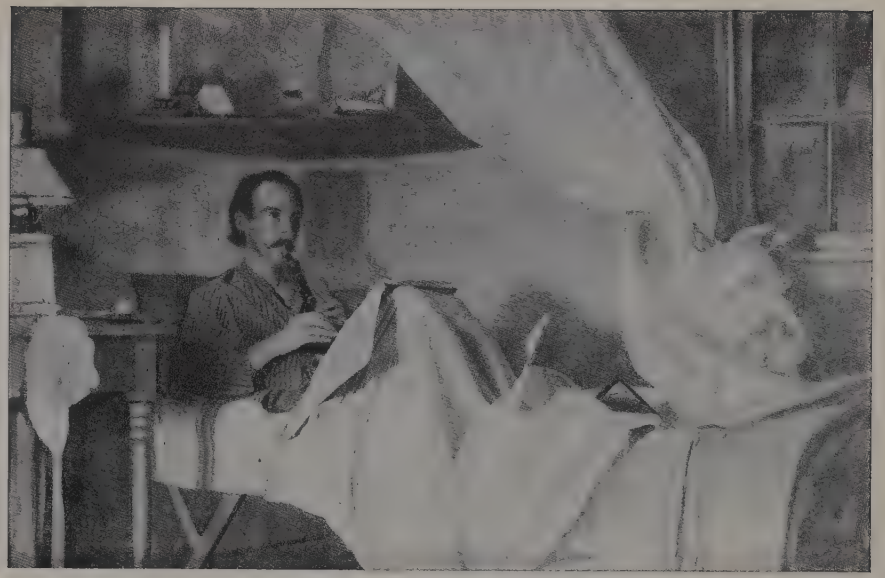
THE AULD PREZENTOR.
Drawn by A. C. Boyd.

From "A Lowden Sabbath Morn."
(Chatto & Windus.)

From "Travels with a Donkey."
(Chatto & Windus.)

PONT DE MONTVERT.

From "An Inland Voyage." (Chatto.)



STEVENSON AT VAILIMA.

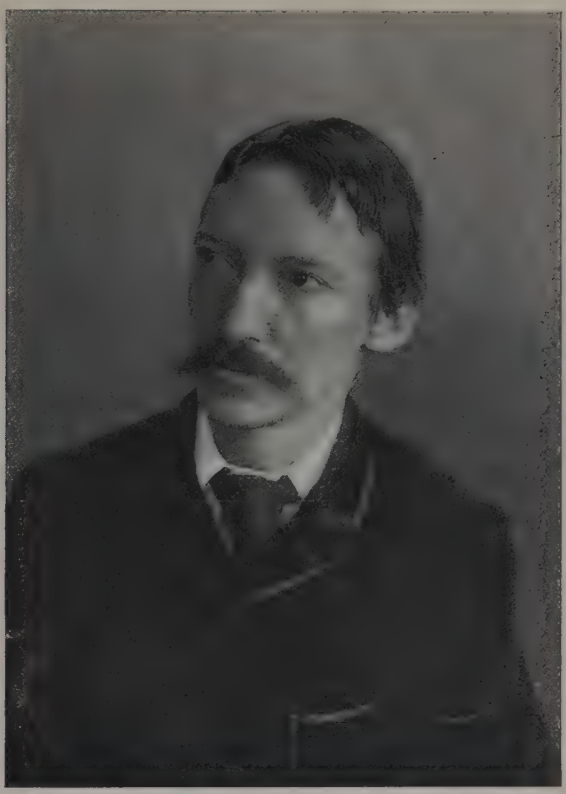


Photo by Falk, Sydney.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Autographed and presented by Stevenson to Mr. H. Walter Barnett, with whose permission it is reproduced.

Photo by J. Patrick, Edinburgh.

IN THE HALL AT VAILIMA.
LYING IN STATE.

"He lay in the hall which was ever his pride, where he had passed the gayest and most delightful hours of his life, a noble room with open stairway and mullioned windows."—From Mr. Lloyd Osbourne's account of the death and burial of Stevenson.

"The Letters of R. L. Stevenson." Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin. (Methuen.)

Photo by J. Patrick, Edinburgh.

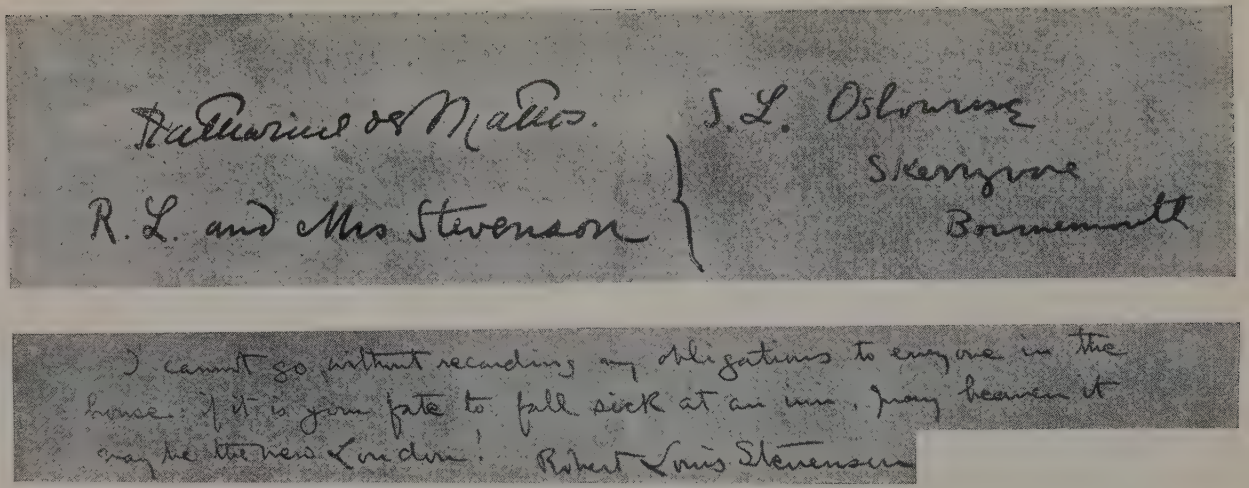
STEVENSON'S TOMB ON MOUNT VAEA, SAMOA.

"There he was laid to rest, and in after time a large tomb in the Samoan fashion, built of great blocks of cement, was placed upon the grave. On either side there is a bronze plate: the one bearing the words in Samoan 'The Tomb of Tusitala,' followed by the speech of Ruth to Naomi from the Samoan Bible: 'Whither thou goest I will go . . . .' At the sides of the inscription were placed a thistle and a hibiscus flower. Upon the other panel, in English, is his own *Requiem*:

1850. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. 1894.

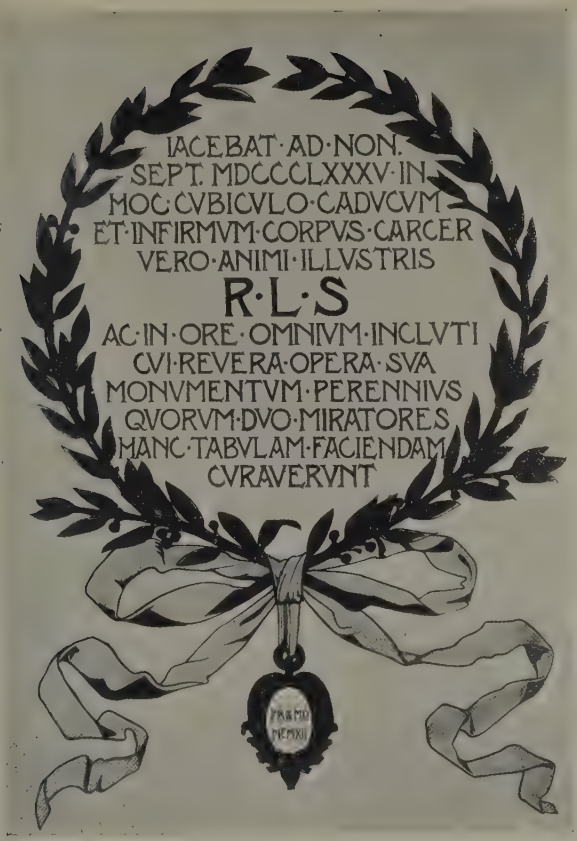
"Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie. . . ."

"Life of R. L. Stevenson." By Graham Balfour. (Methuen.)


Steamer of Malta.
R. L. and Mrs Stevenson
S. L. Osbourne
Skerryvore
Bournemouth
I cannot go without recording my obligations to everyone in the house: if it is your fate to fall sick at an inn, pray heaven it may be the New London!
Robert Louis Stevenson

By courtesy of Mr. T. Werner Laurie.

STEVENSON'S ENTRY IN THE VISITORS' BOOK AT THE NEW LONDON HOTEL, EXETER.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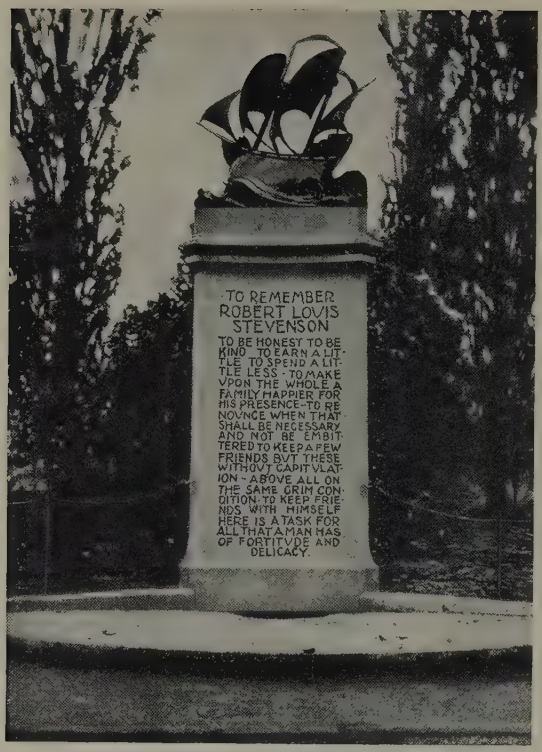
MONVMENTVM · PERENNIVS
QVORVM · DVO · MIRATORES
HANC · TABVLAM · FACIENDAM
CVRAVERVNT

By courtesy of Mr. Wilfred Drake.

MEMORIAL WINDOW, IN STAINED GLASS BY WILFRED DRAKE, THAT HAS BEEN PLACED BY HIS MOTHER, AND HIS BROTHER, MAURICE DRAKE, THE NOVELIST, IN THE ROOM STEVENSON OCCUPIED AT THE NEW LONDON HOTEL, EXETER.



From "Stevenson's Works." *Swanston Edition.* (Cassell.)

STEVENSON'S MONUMENT AT SAN FRANCISCO.

Photo by J. Patrick Edinburgh.

BUST OF STEVENSON.

By G. W. Stevenson, R.S.A., in the Scottish Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.

From a painting by Wal Paget in "The Master of Ballantrae." (Cassell.)

"THE SKIPPER AND ALL THE REST WERE CAST INTO THE SEA BY THE METHOD OF WALKING THE PLANK."

STEVENSON: THE MAN AND HIS WORK

STEVENSON: THE MAN AND HIS WORK

By Neil Munro

I.

HOWEVER barren of good literature the latter part of the Victorian era might appear to those worthy people whose interest in fiction terminated with Thackeray and Dickens, it has already in retrospect for a younger age the bounty and the glow of unrecoverable autumn days. "Other gifts have followed, for such loss I would believe, abundant recompense," even though the weather is never likely to be quite so splendid, the morns so magic, as when enamoured youth attended at the harvest homes of Hardy, Meredith, and Stevenson. Fervour is an affair of the arteries, like youth itself, and if there be less elation for us in the work of our most gifted young contemporaries, it boots not to boast of what is doubtless due to some calcareous infiltration. They, too, may take some place in the remembrance and affection of an era. All good things are passed on.

Bleak and barren though the autumn of the nineteenth century seemed to so many of our elders, because the blood was thin and cold, and the wits were perhaps less nimble, we know now that the weather and the crops were a decent average. It was our privilege to follow home with cheers the maiden-sheaves of three good husbandmen. Possibly not the greatest of them, as time may show, but personally the most beloved, Robert Louis Stevenson, has, the soonest of the three, indubitably become a classic, the culminating figure in one epoch of the romance now temporarily somewhat in eclipse, his name alone enough to rouse the mood of gladness and affection, his work a national possession because acceptable and dear in more or less degree, like ancient songs, alike to finely cultivated and to simple people. In the years which have elapsed since his death in Samoa in 1894, his place with readers, however it be with men who write—a matter of secondary importance—has been each year more durably

established. The young have not grown weary of his stories though, significantly, alone among the tales of his contemporaries they have become the vehicle of the teacher. His philosophy, which emanates from every line he wrote, and on reflection jumps to the mind in concrete form, has not, for the elderly, grown stale, *démodé*, nor disreputable, for faith, hope, charity, courage, and human goodwill are abiding elements in the philosophies of all ages, things tangible to take hold of in this unintelligible world, and welcome to every wholesome appetite, like bread and water.

Save in the great gift of health, the stars that shone on Stevenson's nativity were all propitious. He had genius, sanity, gaiety, and an abiding charm of humanity which ensured him many ardent friendships. He was happy in his parentage, his opportunities, and the circumstances of his folk, which were such, that at no time, save very briefly in California, and then only for the sake of pride, had he any serious cause to apprehend the calls of Byles, the butcher. Fate never drove him to the necessity of banking down his fires periodically to boil a domestic pot ; he could afford to be deliberate and fastidious in the selection and in the execution of his tasks. No other writer in our time had his artistic reputation so carefully fostered and guarded by friends, themselves accomplished and discerning. They nursed it like a flower. They would have nothing from him but his best, even if he were prepared to give them otherwise, which consciously, he never was. Knowing that good work was expected from him, he came always "nobly to the grapple." In his prolonged valetudinarian absences, those friends at home, in closest touch with English sentiment, appraising tendencies, certain of his power and jealous for his fame, saw to it that no inferior performance should be permitted to discount his merits. This high estimate of what he was destined to achieve was manifest very early when his father withdrew "The Pentland Rising" from circulation. It seems, further, to have led to the suppression in permanent form in England, till after his death, of several works regarded as inferior in quality, like "The Amateur Emigrant," "In the South Seas" and "The Misadventures of John Nicholson."

This zealous solicitude for the prestige of a young artist who seemed ready to accept its implication of a rare and precious genius which must never be allowed, as it were, to wet its feet, undoubtedly gave the cynics some excuse to scoff. England, hitherto, had never been a country to

handle its artistic prodigies like fragile porcelain; its glory had been men robust and prodigal, who spent themselves with royal generosity, with recklessness indeed, as kings with boundless stores of life and inspiration, too eager to worry about an occasional copper coin in the bulk of their golden largesse. In that early Stevensonian cult there was something, as it seemed, of what with insular complacence we are apt to regard as the Continental: he was applauded as a *petit maître*, and all the trappings—the velvet jacket, the black flannel shirt, the great preoccupation with Style, and the tendency to triolets, were "in a concatenation according." "You should do everything in minuet time" was Lord Chesterfield's advice; good enough counsel for a *petit maître*, but not the deportment expected from a successor to Walter Scott, whose limp had never spoiled his stride across the mountains.

Yet Stevenson and his friends were right, with shadowy premonitions. He was not of triple brass, to embark on a Comédie Humaine with superb indifference to mortal limitation or the hope of making up in bulk what he might sacrifice in finish. That "something not ourselves" knows what a man is fit for, and dictates what he shall attempt, with a finger ever on the pulse, withdrawing nervous granules from the brain and so creating weariness when weariness is best. Under that dictation Stevenson confined himself, in the main, to enterprises which could be accomplished in the impetus of a single mood of inspiration, whose entire features, from start to finish, could be compassed in a moment's thought, as lyrics are, or ought to be, conceived: his peculiar strength and pleasure were in fastidious revision more than in creation. In five-and-twenty volumes of his works, there are only six or seven wherein—unaided by collaboration—he embarked on epic voyages (if novels like "Kidnapped" and "Treasure Island" may be so regarded); the bulk of his work, and possibly what shall last the longest, is brief and altogether lyrical. For Stevenson to plunge, like Scott or Dickens, into great uncharted seas with no land visible on the other side, or toil with the imperative printer at his heels, was a physical impossibility. He was essentially an inland voyager, leisuredly sailing single-handed, pulling up to the bank at nightfall, each day by itself a trip completed. It was well, then, that the sense, in himself and in his friends, of things impending, made them scrupulous about the nature of the freightage.

For one who only carried picked cargoes, during fifteen or

sixteen years, and only for nine of them with the stimulus of public appreciation, the quantity alone in an edition like the Swanston, whose issue is the occasion of this article, is amazing.* There are five-and-twenty volumes of essays, poems, travels, biography, tales and letters, wherein is seldom the slightest indication of the invalid. On the contrary the spirit which is disengaged from this mass of a physical weakling's work is like that which emanates from beings hardy, self-assured and joyful. Only his language sometimes minces; his nature steps high-breasted like a stag, regardless of the weather. Doubtless, in tender human lives, where the ebbs are exceeding low, full tides come higher than elsewhere on the beaches; for sore days and inert are compensating hours when, pain dispelled and the banner of Bloody Jack hauled down, the world is clothed in grandeur—to breathe is bliss, and the voices of one's fellow-men are sweetest music. From these hours of manumission from his maladies, Stevenson conceived the world and life as things more infinitely grand than they are to such as have perpetual vigour. It is too often the hale, well-nourished, safe, and comfortable who cloy of common pleasures like the light of sun, and grow critical and contemptuous of the very gestures of their fellow-beings.

Stevenson never aged nor lost his illusions, because to find himself awake at any time to the full and serene possession of untroubled faculties was, in a sense, reincarnation, a fresh beginning in a world of brave sublunary things. If he looked at the drab of life he saw it as a thing exceptional, a social distemper no more general than his own poor lungs, to be regarded like his hæmorrhages, or the monsters of "The Dynamiter," with that ironic humour which is the gentlemanly antagonist of terror. Fashions in fiction chop and change as in gowns and millinery; the waist-line has come down of late, and novels for this spring season are didactic, sociological, political, and all that to the time of Stevenson a novel, any more than poetry or painting, should not be, but idealism, romance, and even sentiment—that horrid thing we condemn so loudly when the sense of it is atrophied in ourselves—have only to be expressed with the authority of genius to be assured at any time of welcome and applause. The world which cherishes the work of Robert Louis Stevenson, which buys more of his books than it bought

* The Swanston Edition of the Works of Stevenson, 25 volumes. With an introduction by Andrew Lang. (Chatto & Windus, in association with Cassell & Co., W. Heinemann, and Longmans, Green & Co.)

when each one, freshly published, had a rubric in the calendar, and which in eighteen years has put three costly complete editions to a premium, has not yet banished fancy.

To impress by power alone is feasible in art; it was done by Balzac and Dumas, but more to personality than to power does human affection for any length of time give its allegiance, and the combination, in the right degree, is irresistible. More potent than the conscious art of Stevenson to retain the place he holds is his individuality as revealed in his career and obvious in his work. His key to our hearts is a fine Horatian urbanity, a grace for the moment lost among practitioners of letters, who, perched on a pedestal of self-approval, preach at us fanatically and rudely criticise the things we love. With his urbanity commingled another element sometimes regarded as antagonistic to it, namely, irony. It is often the resort of the embittered and the harsh, but likewise it has always been the weapon of men with an inability to shout across the table against the cock-sure. In its amiable form it does not lapse to cynicism, being sensitive and gentle, having no source in a flattering self-esteem. This spirit of kindly mockery pervades the work of Stevenson. It animates much of his verse, even, and there perceived so often as an undertone of modest and amused self-criticism, has doubtless contributed to the hesitation with which some of his heartiest admirers accept him as a poet. Very few of his poems, his widow tells us, were conceived with any other purpose than the entertainment of the moment. The metrical inspiration of some of them is easily to be discovered, for, like Burns and Kipling, he was ever best at a song when he had an air to fit it to. When we cut the numbers of "Underwoods" or "Songs of Travel" from day to day out of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, they seemed perfect little gems of unpretentious thicket song, which may be sometimes sweeter, even to fastidious ears, than the uproar of the nightingale. To me, at all events, they still have a charm, perhaps, not wholly in their essence but maintained by memory and association. There cried, and still cries in them, the soul of exile and of "old unable years." His Scottish verse is in a different category; the gentle ironist is there too obvious. Stevenson's accurate and forceful use of the vernacular is not to be denied, but he used it in his verse in a manner not wholly unsophisticated, in hours when the artistic possibilities of the thing were the inspiration and not the heart's emotions.

Urbanity and irony, though not the stuff of immortal

poetry, are nowhere more effective than in the essay, whose best exponents have taught us to regard these qualities as virtually indispensable. It is therefore more in the essay than in verse or novel that Stevenson's individuality and charm as man and writer are best revealed, and it is impossible to quarrel with the conclusion of Mr. Andrew Lang in his introduction to the Swanston Edition that we have in Stevenson " the master British essayist of the later nineteenth century," by reason of his vivacity, vitality, his original reflections on life, and his personal and fascinating style, regarding which it is perhaps unfortunate that he took the world too much into his confidence, since " sedulous ape " is the readiest criticism to come to the lips of the Philistine. Poets first make poetry, and only afterwards learn about anapæsts and amphibrachys that they may understand their critics. Some such postliminious after-application of old canons to acts already done intuitively is as common with artists as with politicians, and Stevenson's paper on " The Technical Elements of Style," like Poe's account of the composition of " The Raven," is more or less an artists' game, an ebullition of energetic gaiety ; his own style had been directed by eye and ear, associative idea, and a natural taste for the verbally unexpected, the surprise. " My style is from the Covenanting writers," he said. Let those who are impressed by such an airy statement, read Patrick Walker and be disillusioned. In truth, any derivation of Stevenson's style from any particular predecessor is tenuous, though his philosophy and his tingling sense of out-door things, his tolerance towards the " friendly and flowing savage " in mankind may have been got directly from America. There are thousands of indications that for his thinking he owed as much to Whitman and Thoreau as to any of the gentlemen prescribed at the best academies. His style, in fine, is an incarnation of his thought and character, and the urbanity and fastidiousness of his nature pervade his rhythm and cadence, the choice and order of his words as much as the selections of his themes. His language could never have been the ready-made stuff of literary slop-shops and the distaste for platitude, which with most people is confined to platitude of phrase or idea, extended, in him, to the adjective. No man was ever less constituted to feel happy in a second-hand pair of trousers, and the search through life and words for what was most in harmony with himself was unsatisfied by anything short of his private ideal.

Where Stevenson thought himself beholden to anyone he was prompt and frank enough to mention it, and generally, as in the case of the Covenanters, gave more credit than was due. His acknowledgments of indebtedness to Defoe, Poe, Kingsley, and Marryat for conceptions in his first book, "Treasure Island," are equivalent to an admission that islands, parrots, skeletons, and dead men's chests are the monopoly of who first makes use of them in fiction. "Treasure Island" none the less, in every particular was from his private mint. But another tale of his, "St. Ives," had—as I may be alone in fancying—its inception in a narrative which he probably had read in youth in the pages of *Chambers' Miscellany*. In a volume of that promiscuous and delightful periodical, once dear to Scottish households, there is given a translation from the French of a "Story of a French Prisoner of War in England," which supplies almost all the essential mechanism of "St. Ives," including the duel in the citadel. Champdivers and Goguelat each fought with half of a pair of scissors attached to a wand; in the French narrative the encounter was with blades of knives so utilised. There is another duel scene of Stevenson's—that by candle-light in the garden in "The Master of Ballantrae"—which seems like a transfigured memory of a similar episode between the Duc de Champdoce and George de Croisenois in a story of Gaboriau's. Of the myriad of such dramatic hints conveyed in the works of the superficial and uninspired who knew not into what recesses of pure gold their picks had reached, I wish he had lived to avail himself still more, for from literature as from life he took no hints but to adorn and elevate.

In two of his stories—"Kidnapped" and "Catriona"—the influence of Walter Scott, I think, is obvious. He had read "Rob Roy" at the age of ten, and stumbled half-asleep into the region of Highland romance as Scott invented it, with the result that save for some actual glimpses he got himself of the Highlands, he saw them ever after in a measure through the Wizard's eyes. "When I think of that novel," he wrote in after years, "I am impatient with all others; they seem but shadows and impostors." Yet there are few Highlanders, I think, who would not, so far as purely Highland features are concerned, prefer the adventures of David Balfour to those of "Waverley" or "Rob Roy." No nice considerations about even an approximate realism governed Scott's treatment of Gaelic life and character: he looked at them as Profesor Reinhardt looks at Sophocles, with a

single eye to their effect as pageantry, and saw them in a light that never was on land or sea. He never reported the speech of the native either in Erse or English but with magnificent insousciance, and a grotesque improbity which has unhappily become stereotyped in most of his successors, and his Gaelic characters are equally remote from actual type. I hesitate to cavil about novels which at times have been my own delight, but the truth is imperative, that Allan Macaulay is the ill-begotten offspring of that gigantic humbug, Macpherson's "Ossian," and Rob Roy, in almost every manifestation, is a Borderer without one drop of mountain blood.

Stevenson was undoubtedly inspired by "Rob Roy," but though he might vow "death to the optic nerve," he used his eyes in this particular territory of Scotland more conscientiously than Scott. He saw the masses of his picture with the eyes of Scott; the details were his own perception. It is the veritable Highland wind that blows across his pages; his glens and coasts have the impressiveness of things emotionally remembered. He had, too, a quicker ear than Scott for alien idioms and turns of utterance, and had evidently read Campbell's "Tales of the West Highlands" with profit to his manipulation of the thought and speech of persons like Alan Breck and Catriona. Further, he had grasped some salient features of the Gaelic character, and though he suggested in a letter to Mr. Barrie that Alan Breck was a Highlander only in his name and otherwise a Sassenach, he did himself there a vast injustice. It was a writer with a marvellous power to reconstruct the pterodactyl from a single tooth who, from one or two letters in the Introduction to "Rob Roy," was able to create the spy James Mor Drummond, as deadly true to one type of Celtic character as it was to the actual history of James Mor, though Stevenson did not know it. Oddly enough, as it may seem to such as do not realise the irony of art, the only blundering chapter in "Kidnapped" has been among the most admired—the piping contest in Balquidder, and that pipers improvise and ornament their improvisations with "warblers" is an error as persistent now as cairngorms or the toast "with Highland honours."

It seems almost a disloyalty to comment upon an inappreciable lapse like this in one who, to the compatriot heart at all events, endears himself by countless virtues of which not least was an almost pious tendency to confine his criticism to himself and his achievements. We rejoice in him, not only

as in him range the perfect artist who has given glad hours and the example of intrepidity to a host of people widely set apart in islands of the sea, and in the depths of continents and in their circumstances, but also as another vindication of a racial spirit capable of flowering into beauty even where "the bells clash of a Sunday, and the wind squalls, and the salt showers fly and beat." From the loins of those Cyclopean men who fought on coast and skerry with the monstrous obstacles of nature—this gentle being with a tender hand to fashion gems! From a long heredity of Puritan austerity, the elegant and debonair!

April, 1912.

II.

The third five-volume instalment of the Swanston edition of Stevenson's works is now* in the hands of the subscribers, and includes three of his most characteristic novels, the whole of his poems with seventeen additional pieces not in most editions, and all the plays, written in collaboration with W. E. Henley.

"Deacon Brodie," "Admiral Guinea," "Beau Austin," and "Macaire" have never been successful either from the box-office point of view or in the estimate of the dramatic critics, and the passage of time, which, sooner with prose drama than with any other kind of literature, makes the fashion of the work antique or obsolete, renders it more unlikely every year that any of the plays in question can be revived with even moderate popular success. The technique of the dramatist since these plays were written has been altered all in the direction of realism; soliloquies and asides are now supposed to be intolerable, though it only wants a dramatist of genius to restore those old conventions to the importance and acceptance which they once enjoyed; but not by reason of this is the actor-manager indifferent to the plays of Stevenson and Henley. There are purely personal considerations why he will always choose another "Macaire" than this—considerations of vanity and diplomacy; but beyond that, he discerns certain elemental qualities in the plays which in any age would militate against their acceptance on the stage however they may charm in private reading.

With Stevenson, however it may have been with Henley,

* November, 1912.

the mood in which the work was done was inimical to dramatic success. Plays no more than poems should be written in fun, as a pleasant literary sport for the leisure hours of gentlemen with the more serious affairs of life for the moment in suspense, and there is every evidence that it was in the same gay irresponsible spirit in which he made Davos Platz wood-cuts that Stevenson gambolled with Thalia. That merry and illuminating essay entitled "A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured," gives the clue to Stevenson's attitude to the drama; he was the child of Skelt, and his notion of a play, to the end, appears to have been "Three-fingered Jack," or "Jack Sheppard," touched up with genuine literary style, the characters robust, and coloured with crimson lake, the speeches orotund and rhetorical, the period thrown far enough back to obviate any chance of the audience finding out that action and speech were of no real age or clime but simply Skeltery. The plays, in short, were written with the tongue in the cheek, and no mixed audience will stand that. As literary excursions they may be read repeatedly with pleasure; particularly for their banter, but it is to the sophisticated they appeal; on the stage the brilliance of their writing fails to make up for their inability to rouse emotion. It was the verdict of a quarter of a century ago; it is the verdict of to-day, when the plays are sometimes presented by a repertory company.

Henley unquestionably provided most of the staying power for both collaborators; he was hopeful that there might be money in them long after Stevenson had come to look on them with indifference or disdain. Of "Deacon Brodie," when produced in 1884, Stevenson wrote that it was "d——d bad." In the following year he wrote significantly to Henley: "Do you think you are right to send 'Macaire,' and 'The Admiral,' about? Not a copy have I sent, nor, (speaking for myself, personally,) do I want sent." The re-perusal of "The Admiral," by the way, was a sore blow. "Eh, God, man! it's a low, black, dirty, blackguard piece, vomitable in many parts, simply vomitable; Pew is in places a reproach to both art and man. What I mean is that I believe in playing dark with second- and third-rate work; 'Macaire,' is a piece of job work hurriedly bockled." These were views, by the way, emphatically anticipated by his father; they greatly exaggerated the defects of the plays, but with this reservation, father and son were right.

Yet, oddly enough, the spirit of a paper game, with which

Stevenson set about play-writing, only to discover that the grown-up world takes its plays seriously, in no way impairs the effect of "A Child's Garden of Verses," also composed in sportive hours—the sportive hours, as it happened, of an author at the time experiencing the mingled joys of hemorrhage, sciatica, and ophthalmia. Though the gentle ironist peeps out sometimes in these nursery recollections, and the deliberate artist always, there is never any mood of insincerity; all is bathed in the spirit of a man in whom the thought of his past years did "breed perpetual benediction," in whom the innocence of any childhood was a thing to reverence, at all events to treat with tenderness. It was by "A Child's Garden of Verses" he made his first impression as a poet, and it will probably be found to maintain his poetical reputation longer than any of its successors, for this particular song-sequence is unique in English verse, and the thing essayed can never conceivably be better done. There is, of course, much in "Underwoods," and "Songs of Travel," that delights maturer moods more lastingly; "Home no Home to me," "In the Highlands, in the Country Places," "Blows the Wind to-day," "The House Beautiful," and almost all the Scots pieces, strike a note peculiarly Stevensonian and beautiful. In the "Additional Poems," given in Vol. XIV., I miss one anonymously published under Henley's editing, when a prize was offered for the identification of its author:

"We found Him firft as in the Dells of May
The Dreaming Damfel finds the earliest Flower;
Thoughtlefs we wandered in the Evening Hour:
Aimlefs and pleafed we went our Random Way:
In the foot-haunted City, in the Night,
Among the alternate Lamps we went and came
Till, like a humorous Thunderbolt, that Name,
The hated Name of BRASH, affailed our Sight.
We faw, we paufed, we entered, feeking Gin.
His Wrath, like a huge Breaker on the Beach,
Broke inftant forth. He on the Counter beat
In his infantile Fury; and his Feet
Danced Impotent Wrath upon the Floor within.
Still as we fled we heard his Idiot Screech."

"Catriona," and "The Master of Ballantrae," I referred to in a former notice of the Swanston Edition. "The Wrecker," which, with "The Ebb Tide," brought Stevenson first to the attention of many sadly impercipient readers who had never previously found him up to their standard of sensationalism,

was probably the most extensively sold of all his larger books. It was the first novel in which he wrote of characters and conditions of life contemporary with himself, so qualifying what Mr. Lang—of all men!—seems to regard as his one deficiency. No modern novel of adventure has a more auspicious opening; the Prologue breathes a tropical and magic air, but that key is not sustained, and though one reads 'The Wrecker," again for the sake of Captain Nares, and, Loudon Dodd, and the fascinating Jim Pinkerton, one feels that the story could have been told as well and less amorphously by many other practitioners of the police novel.

III.

In the latest instalment* of the admirable Swanston edition of the Works of Robert Louis Stevenson are the books to be regarded as his contribution to the science, art, or sport—whichever it may be—of Politics. He was apparently a philosophic Tory; in practice governed by the most democratic ideals, but withal, when it came to stated principals, a contemner of the "G.O.M.," Home Rule, and Mr. Hyndman. In the happy sanctuary of Samoa, a little king in exile, experiencing the joys of a sort of feudal lord, it seemed to him that Britain, shedding every rag of feudalism as fast as it could, was drifting to perdition. There is an essay on "The Day after Tomorrow," in the sixteenth of these volumes which shows his apprehension of an overwhelming socialism wherein the official inspector should be over-riding all, and our condition something far more like the ant-heap than any previous human polity. In his writings, however, are few such warm deliverances on the problems of his native land; he was out of the fight before the bricks were really seriously flying, and we count it fortunate that his political excursions in the main confined themselves to the isles of his adoption, where the issues were less complicated, and the party protagonists a little more romantic than they are with us at home. "A Footnote to History" and "Letters from Samoa" may have seemed to some readers an unfortunate divagation from the proper business of his life, but these diversions are traditional in the best of imaginative writers, and they serve to prove some human touch with things in actual life. When

Stevenson settled in Samoa he found the island with a native nominal king and a half, and German influence obnoxiously pre-eminent; the white officials appointed by the Berlin Convention quite unequal to their task. The "Footnote" and these Samoan letters to *The Times* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* may have as little influence on his future reputation as the "Defensio Secunda" has on the repute of Milton, and they only partly served their purpose, for, though the two obnoxious officials were withdrawn mainly on his intervention, his friend the dethroned Mattaafa gained nothing by it.

Nor were his other divagations into the history, life and manners of these ultimate isles quite to the taste of eager Stevensonians. When he began the series of travel papers now known as "In the Seven Seas" it was auspiciously; the Odyssian glamour was about his opening, where we share his wonder and delight in that first landfall. But "The Isles of Vivian," which made him bond-slave for the rest of his life, when seen too long and intimately, refused to sustain the emotional ardour, the subjective beauty of their first conception, and the task he had embarked on with elation speedily began to chafe. We have here, as in the Edinburgh Edition, but a selection from the South Sea articles contributed in 1891 to *Black and White* and the *New York Sun*; with the addition of a half section omitted from the Edinburgh Edition describing a visit to the Kona coast of Hawaii and the lepers' port of embarkation for Molokai. That part of the work which best pleased Stevenson himself was the section treating of the Gilbert Islands, and it derives additional interest as describing a state of manners and of government now passed away.

The magic air of the Nukahiva landfall is repeated in "The Beach of Falesa," the best tale of "The Island Nights' Entertainments," where the narrator sees his island first at dawn as Conrad's sailor sees the East in "Youth," mysterious and odorous. The very best criticism of it came from the author himself in a letter to Sidney Colvin:—"It is the first realistic South Sea story; I mean with real South Sea character and details of life. Everybody else who has tried, that I have seen, got carried away by the romance, and ended in a kind of sugar-candy sham epic, and the whole effect was lost—there was no etching, no human grip, consequently no conviction. Now I have got the smell and look of the thing a good deal. You will know more about the South Seas after you have read my little tale than if you had

read a library. As to whether anyone else will read it I have no guess. I am in an off time, but there is just the possibility it might make a hit ; for the yarn is good and melodramatic, and there is quite a love-affair—for me." It is to be noticed that "The Beach of Falesa," in 1892 was regarded as immoral in the absence of a marriage certificate : "It is a poisoned bad world for the romancer, this Anglo-Saxon world," said the indignant author.

"'The Ebb Tide,' or Stevenson's Blooming Error—about as grim a tale as ever was written, and as grimy and as hateful," was the author's final judgment on a tale which gave him a great deal of trouble, and emerged from his hands at last seriously curtailed in its proportions as intended. In his correspondence, curiously, there is little or no indication of the share that his stepson, Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, had in its design and preparation, and when it first appeared, all the good parts in it—as the opening chapters—were ascribed to Stevenson, and all the bad to his collaborateur. A note by Mr. Osbourne to the present edition shows some natural resentment of so unflattering a conclusion, and he explains that the early parts of both "The Wrecker" and "The Ebb Tide," were entirely his as well as the whole inception of Huish's scheme. The collaboration produced a work of considerable popularity ; of its kind the tale is excellent ; but its dialogue and its narrative style are on different planes, and it lacks the artistic unity of that fine fragment "Weir of Hermiston," or even "St. Ives," as completed by Quiller-Couch.

From a painting by W. Hatherell in "Robert Louis Stevenson." Days with Great Writers series. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

"TOOK DOWN THE FOLDS OF HER HAIR —SHOOK IT ROUND HER FACE AND THE POOL REPEATED HER THUS VEILED."
Prince Otto.

NOTES

NOTES

The literary contents of this volume are, to some extent, an anthology compiled from back Numbers of THE BOOKMAN that are in constant demand but have long been out of print, and we are indebted to the kindness of Mr. Edmund Gosse, Mr. Austin Dobson and Mr. William Watson for permission to include the poems by them from their published works.

Our thanks are due to Sir Sidney Colvin for the loan of the three different examples of Stevenson's handwriting, which we reproduce on pages 106 and 107. Nobody knew R. L. S. more intimately than Sir Sidney Colvin, who was always one of his closest friends, and remained his adviser and constant correspondent to the end. By his editing of Stevenson's Letters Sir Sidney has placed all Stevensonians under a lasting debt of gratitude to him, and it is with keenest anticipations we hear that he is contemplating a book about Stevenson that shall be one of a series, part critical and part personal, on Victorian writers and artists he has known. Sir Sidney Colvin knew all the greatest of the later Victorians in art and letters, and the value and interest of such a series of personal recollections from his pen cannot easily be exaggerated.

"The Island of the Blest," from which, on page 32, we extract a description of R. L. S., was written by Mr. Gosse in 1879, and he now confesses for the first time that the characters in this poem were studied from his associates of that day, and in particular from intimate friends. Stevenson was pictured in it under the name of Cynthius, and the picture is a very careful study of the man he then was, at the age of twenty-nine—a very different personality, of course, from the staider and more responsible Stevenson of later years—a Stevenson that is, perhaps, in some danger of being forgotten. This gives the stanzas now a certain historical value, and we are therefore the more obliged to Mr. Gosse for permitting us to reprint the verses here and to make this interesting disclosure concerning them.

The poem, "To Tusitala in Vailima," on page 77, was the dedication to Stevenson by Mr. Gosse of his volume, "In Russet and Silver," which is now included in his Collected

Poems. Some lines in it proved strangely prophetic, and it has a peculiarly poignant interest in that it was one of the last things Stevenson read; and the last letter he wrote, two days before he died, was to Mr. Gosse acknowledging the receipt of the volume: "Let me speak first of the dedication. I thank you for it from my heart. It is beautifully said, beautifully and kindly felt; and I should be a churl indeed if I were not grateful, and an ass if I were not proud. I remember when Symonds dedicated a book to me; I wrote and told him of 'the pang of gratified vanity' with which I had read it. The pang was present again, but how much more sober and autumnal—like your volume. Let me tell you a story, or remind you of a story. In the year of grace something or other, anything between '76 and '78. . . ." Then follows the story, revealing a charming instance of Mr. Gosse's friendliness to R. L. S. and expressing a wistful doubt whether at the time the teller of the story had sufficiently appreciated that friendliness. Every lover of Stevenson's letters knows the story, and because of it gives Mr. Gosse a special place in his heart.

Mr. Leslie M. Ward, whose admirable etching of Stevenson's Bournemouth house, "Skerryvore," we reproduce on page 64, is still a very young man; he is a gold-medalist of South Kensington, and a teacher in the Bournemouth technical schools. His etchings of local scenes, particularly of Poole Harbour, have met with the highest appreciation; by those competent to judge he is recognised as an artist of fine original gifts, and one whose work is destined to be heard much of in the near future. The "Skerryvore" etching is the property of Mr. Ernest Cooper, of 100, Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, and he has been kind enough to send us a print and permit us to reproduce it.

A new edition of "R. L. Stevenson's Edinburgh Days," by Eve Blantyre Simpson, has just been published, illustrated with portraits of Stevenson and photographs of places associated with him. Messrs. Chatto and Windus are issuing a handsome illustrated edition of one of the best of Stevenson's shorter stories, "The Pavilion on the Links," with a coloured frontispiece and twenty-four full-page black-and-white illustrations and end-papers by Gordon Browne; and Messrs. Cassell are publishing this month a new edition of "Kidnapped."

The appearance of "The Pavilion on the Links" marked a turning-point in Stevenson's literary career. "He stole quietly into the world of fame," Justin M'Carthy writes in his "History of Our Own Times." "Most of us heard of him for the first time, a great many years ago, when a remarkable story, a short story, appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, called 'The Pavilion on the Links,' signed with the initials 'R. L. S.' None of us then had the least idea as to the identity of the writer of the story, but some of us, at all events, felt satisfied that a new and fresh power had arisen in English literature." And in his "Stevensoniana," that invaluable storehouse of all that concerned Stevenson, Mr. J. A. Hammerton summarises and partly reprints the essay in which Sir A. Conan Doyle said, in 1890, that "'The Pavilion on the Links' marks the high-water mark of his genius, and is enough in itself, without another line, to give a man a permanent place among the great story-tellers of the race."

Since "Kidnapped" was first published, in 1886, edition after edition has had to be printed to meet the unending demand for the story of David Balfour's adventures and his exploits in the company of the doughty Alan Breck, one of the noblest soldiers of fortune that has ever flashed through the pages of a book. In the opinion of the author "Kidnapped" was his best, indeed his only good story, and the one he liked best himself, a judgment which is to some extent confirmed by so acute a critic as Mr. Henry James, who said that it represented the best work of Stevenson up to 1887, averring that "the episode of the quarrel of the two men on the mountain-side is a real stroke of genius and has the very logic and rhythm of life." In a copy of the book that he presented to Dr. E. L. Trudeau, at Lake Saranac, Stevenson wrote:

> 'Here is the one sound page of all my writing,
> The one I'm proud of, and that I delight in."

For the new Illustrated Edition of "Kidnapped," which they are issuing this autumn, Messrs. Cassell have secured the services of the well-known Scottish artist, W. R. B. Stott, one of whose eight brilliant colour pictures for it we reproduce in this Number.

We are indebted also to Messrs. Seeley, Service and Co.

for permission to reproduce one of Mr. James Heron's colour pictures, and one of Mr. T. Hamilton Crawford's black-and-white drawings from their different editions of Stevenson's "Edinburgh"; to Mr. John Lane for permission to reproduce three of Mr. Charles Robinson's delightful illustrations from "A Child's Garden of Verses"; to Messrs. Cassell for permission to reproduce one of the colour illustrations by Mr. Wal Paget from "The Master of Ballantrae," several of the portraits and sketches from the Pentland Edition of Stevenson's works, and illustrations from certain of their editions of "The Wrecker," "Treasure Island," "The Black Arrow," "Catriona," and "Island Nights Entertainments"; and to Messrs. Chatto and Windus for permission to reproduce illustrations from the Swanston Edition, and from divers books of Stevenson's published by them, including one of Mr. A. C. Boyd's characteristic drawings from "A Lowden Sabbath Morn," sketches from "Travels with a Donkey," and and "An Inland Voyage," and one of Alberto Sangorski's beautiful illuminations in colour and gold from the "Prayers written at Vailima."

One of the most intimate links with Stevenson was broken by the death of his old nurse, "Cummy," Miss Alison Cunningham, who died at Edinburgh on the 17th July last, in her ninety-second year. He dedicated "A Child's Garden of Verses" to her—"the angel of my infant life." Some of his happiest letters are to her, and to the end of his day he remembered with gratitude her loving services. She was buried in Morningside Cemetery on the 21st July, and among the flowers that were laid upon her grave was a beautiful wreath from Mrs. R. L. Stevenson, and roses and honeysuckle sent by Lord and Lady Guthrie from the garden of Swanston Cottage. This touching and graceful tribute "To Alison Cunningham" appeared in the *Paisley Express* over the initials W. A. M.—which stand for the Rev. Walter A. Mursell:

"The comfortable hand is still
That smoothed the snow-white Pillow-Hill,
Hushed is the kindly voice that read
The stories to the Boy a-bed;
That calmed the fear and soothed the pain,
Till morning light returned again.
And had you done no more than this,
The world your gentle hand would kiss;
The sick child in your sunshine grew—
Ah! Cummy, what we owe to you.

Now you have left us for a while
And gone to seek your Treasure Isle,
The Last Adventure you have gone,
But you will not fare forth alone,
For your 'ain laddie' sure will know
The way your weary feet must go;
The spirit of a little child
Will come from out the unknown wild
To take the comfortable hand
That led him through the uneven land.
Ah! Just like God, this thing to do,
To send with eager steps for you
Death's Angel in the form of 'Lou.'"

W. A. M.

Messrs. Longmans, the original publishers of "A Child's Garden of Verses," issue the book in a beautiful edition containing twelve full-page colour plates and numerous illustrations in black and white by Jessie Wilcox Smith; and in a handy pocket edition, with an introduction by Andrew Lang. Amongst other editions, they issue one for the pocket also of "The Wrong Box," "The Dynamiter," and "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

Messrs. Chatto & Windus are publishing this autumn a Collected Edition of Stevenson's Poems, "A Child's Garden of Verses," which has always hitherto been published separately, being now for the first time included with the rest of his poetical work. Stevenson the Novelist has somewhat overshadowed Stevenson the Poet, except so far as "A Child's Garden of Verses" is concerned, and the popularity of that, the most delightful book of its kind, has perhaps done some little injustice to "Underwoods," the "Ballads," and the rest of his poetry. As readers of his letters know, Stevenson never took himself seriously as a poet. "You may be surprised to hear," he wrote to Henley in 1883, "that I am now a great writer of verses; that is, however, so. I have the mania now, like my betters, and faith, if I live till I am forty, I shall have a book of rhymes like Pollock, Gosse, or whom you please. Really, I have begun to learn some of the rudiments of that trade, and have written three or four pretty enough pieces of octosyllabic nonsense, semi-serious, semi-smiling. A kind of prose Herrick, divested of the gift of verse, and you behold the Bard. But I like it."

Later, in 1887, Stevenson wrote to J. A. Symonds: "I

wonder if you saw my book of verses? It went into a second edition, because of my name, I suppose, and its *prose* merits. I do not set up to be a poet. Only an all-round literary man: a man who talks, not one who sings. But I believe the very fact that it is only speech served the book with the public. Horace is much a speaker, and see how popular! Most of Martial is only speech, and I cannot conceive a person who does not love his Martial; most of Burns also, such as 'The Louse,' 'The Toothache,' 'The Haggis,' and lots more of his best. Excuse this little apology for my house; but I don't like to come before people who have a note of song and let it be supposed I do not know the difference."

In a letter to Sir Sidney Colvin, the same year, he remarked that "the success of 'Underwoods' is gratifying. You see, the verses are sane; that is their strong point, and it seems it is strong enough to carry them."

All of which is true, but far from the whole truth. The wistful tenderness of feeling, the high seriousness, the whimsicality, the quaint and delicate fancifulness of Stevenson play through his poems as they do through his letters. "After reading the new book, the 'Underwoods,'" wrote Mr. Gosse, when it was published, "we come back to 'A Child's Garden' with a clearer sense of the writer's intention, and a wider experience of his poetical outlook upon life. The later book helps us to comprehend the former; there is the same sincerity, the same buoyant simplicity, the same curiously candid and confidential attitude of mind. If any one doubted that Mr. Stevenson was putting his own childish memories into verse in the first book, all doubt must cease in reading the second book, where the experiences, although those of an adult, have exactly the same convincing air of candour. . . . His 'Underwoods,' with its title openly borrowed from Ben Jonson, is an easy book to appreciate and enjoy, but not to review. In many respects it is plainly the work of the same fancy that described the Country of Counterpane and the Land of the Story-books, but it has grown a little sadder, and a great deal older. There is the same delicate sincerity, the same candour and simplicity, the same artless dependence on the good faith of the public. The ordinary themes of the poets are untouched; there is not one piece from cover to cover which deals with the passion of love. The book is occupied with friendship, with nature, with the honourable instincts of man's

moral machinery. Above all, it enters with great minuteness, and in a very confidential spirit, into the theories and moods of the writer himself. It will be to many readers a revelation of the everyday life of an author whose impersonal writings have given them so much and so varied pleasure. Not a dozen ordinary interviewers could have extracted so much of the character of the man himself as he gives us in these one hundred and twenty pages."

That Stevenson derived no little of his character from his father is evident from the essay on "Thomas Stevenson," in the "Memories and Portraits":—"He was a man of somewhat antique strain: with a blend of sternness and softness that was wholly Scottish, and, at first, somewhat bewildering; with a profound essential melancholy of disposition and (what often accompanies it) the most humorous geniality in company; shrewd and childish; passionately attached, passionately prejudiced; a man of many extremes, many faults of temper, and no very stable foothold for himself among life's troubles. Yet he was a wise adviser; many men, and these not inconsiderable, took counsel with him habitually. . . . He had excellent taste, though whimsical and partial; collected old furniture, and delighted specially in sunflowers long before the days of Mr. Wilde; took a lasting pleasure in prints and pictures; was a devout admirer of Thomson of Duddingston at a time when few shared the taste; and, though he read little, was constant to his favourite books. He had never any Greek; Latin he happily retaught himself after he had left school, where he was a mere consistent idler: happily, I say, for Lactantius, Vossius, and Cardinal Bona were his chief authors. The first he must have read for twenty years uninterruptedly, keeping it near him in his study, and carrying it in his bag on journeys. Another old theologian, Brown of Wamphray, was often in his hands. When he was indisposed he had two books, "Guy Mannering," and "The Parent's Assistant," of which he never wearied. He was a strong Conservative, or, as he preferred to call himself, a Tory; except in so far as his views were modified by a hot-headed chivalrous sentiment for women. He was actually in favour of a marriage law under which any woman might have a divorce for the asking, and no man on any ground whatever; and the same sentiment found expression in a Magdalen Mission in Edinburgh, founded and largely supported by himself. . . . His talk,

compounded of so much sterling sense and so much freakish humour, and clothed in language so apt, droll, and emphatic, was a perpetual delight to all who knew him before the clouds began to settle on his mind. His use of language was both just and picturesque; and when, at the begininng of his illness, he began to feel the ebbing of this power, it was strange and painful to hear him reject one word after another as inadequate, and at length desist from the search and leave his phrase unfinished rather than finish it without propriety."

Stevenson's first book was "The Pentland Rising," published in 1866, when he was sixteen years of age; this was followed two years later by that "little skit," as he called it, "The Charity Bazaar." When he was writing to Sir Sidney Colvin in 1894 as to what of his work should be included in a Collected Edition, he was doubtful about "The Charity Bazaar," and said "I don't think it will do"; but he had no hesitation concerning "The Pentland Rising," and wrote with emphasis, "I heartily abominate and reject the idea of reprinting 'The Pentland Rising.' For God's sake let me get buried first."

Although he was so youthful when his first work was printed, Stevenson was far from being a precocious genius. His literary career did not begin in earnest till 1878; he made his first considerable success with "Treasure Island," in 1883, and cannot be said to have arrived at actual popularity till "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" made its sensational appearance in 1886. As everybody knows, he was a slow and painstaking worker; nevertheless, in the sixteen years of his active literary life—from 1878 to 1894, the year of his death—that he got through with an enormous amount of work is sufficiently evidenced by a list of his books:

"An Inland Voyage" (Kegan Paul, 1878).
"Edinburgh" (Seeley, 1878).
"Travels with a Donkey" (Kegan Paul, 1879).
"Virginibus Puerisque" (Chatto & Windus, 1881).
"Familiar Studies in Men and Books" (Chatto, 1882).
"The New Arabian Nights" (Chatto, 1882).
"The Silverado Squatters" (Chatto, 1883).
"Treasure Island" (Cassell, 1883).
"Prince Otto" (Chatto, 1885).
"The Dynamiter," in collaboration with Mrs. Stevenson (Longmans, 1885).

" A Child's Garden of Verses " (Longmans, 1885).
" Kidnapped " (Cassell, 1886).
" Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde " (Longmans, 1886).
" Memoir of Fleeming Jenkins " (Longmans, 1886).
" Memories and Portraits " (Chatto, 1887).
" Underwoods " (Chatto, 1887).
" The Merry Men, and Other Tales " (Chatto, 1887).
" The Black Arrow " (Cassell, 1888).
" The Wrong Box " in collaboration with Lloyd Osbourne (Longmans, 1889).
" Father Damien " (Chatto, 1890).
" Ballads " (Chatto, 1890).
" The Master of Ballantrae " (Cassell, 1891).
" The Wrecker," in collaboration with Lloyd Osbourne (Cassell, 1892).
" Three Plays: Deacon Brodie, Beau Austin, and Admiral Guinea," in collaboration with W. E. Henley (Heinemann, 1892).
" Across the Plains " (Chatto, 1892.)
" A Footnote to History " (Cassell, 1893).
" Island Nights Entertainments " (Cassell, 1893).
" Catriona " (Cassell, 1893).
" The Ebb Tide," in collaboration with Lloyd Osbourne (Heinemann, 1894).
" Macaire," in collaboration with W. E. Henley (Heinemann, 1895).
" Songs of Travel " (Chatto, 1896).
" Weir of Hermiston " unfinished. Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin (Chatto, 1896).
" St. Ives," completed by Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch (Heinemann, 1898).
" In the South Seas " (Chatto, 1900).
" Prayers written at Vailima." With an Introduction by Mrs. Stevenson. (Chatto, 1904).
" Essays of Travel " (Chatto, 1905).
" Lay Morals, and Other Papers " (Chatto, 1911).
" The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson," Edited by Sir Sidney Colvin (Methuen, 1911).
" Records of a Family of Engineers " (Chatto, 1912).

As this does not pretend to be a full bibliography, no account is taken of any but the latest and completest edition of the Letters, and the Davos Platz and other minor, privately

printed booklets (now included in the Collected Editions) are omitted. And we shall not attempt to chronicle the numerous editions through which all the books have passed, and are still passing.

There have already been three handsome Collected Editions of the Works of Stevenson: in issuing the two last of which his various publishers collaborated:

"The Edinburgh Edition" (Chatto, 1894–1898).
"The Pentland Edition" (Cassell, 1907–1908).
"The Swanston Edition" (Chatto, 1912).

Of books about Stevenson there is a very large and ever-increasing number, including:

"The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson." By Graham Balfour (Methuen).
"Stevenson." By Sir Walter Raleigh (Arnold).
"R. L. Stevenson." By L. Cope Cornford (Blackwood).
"Stevensoniana." By J. A. Hammerton (Edinburgh: John Grant).
"Robert Louis Stevenson." By Isobel Strong (Cassell).
"Recollections of Robert Louis Stevenson in the Pacific." By Arthur Johnstone (Chatto & Windus).
"Stevenson." Days with Great Writers series (Hodder & Stoughton).
"Robert Louis Stevenson." By H. B. Baildon (Chatto).
"In the Track of R. L. Stevenson." By J. H. Hammerton (Arrowsmith).
"Stevenson's Shrine," By Laura Stubbs (De la More Press).
"R. L. Stevenson's Edinburgh Days." By Eve Blantyre Simpson (Hodder & Stoughton).
"The Stevenson Originals." By Eve Blantyre Simpson (Foulis).

In 1895 Sir James Balfour Paul (a relative of Stevenson's) contributed to *The Athenæum* a note concerning the portraits of Stevenson, which he revised some years later for inclusion in Mr. J. A. Hammerton's "Stevensoniana," from which we make some extracts: "It may be interesting, and not altogether without use, to put on record a note of the portraits of this author which have been made at different periods of his

life. As he himself acknowledged, he was a difficult subject to paint, and the consequence is that there is not in existence any thoroughly satisfactory likeness of Stevenson. So far as I have been able to ascertain, there are only two finished portraits of him. One is a small full-length by J. S. Sargent, R.A., painted at Bournemouth in 1885, and now in the possession of Mrs. Fairchild at Boston. This portrait is said to verge on caricature, to be 'a little more living than life,' and has been compared, by one very competent to judge, to a *Vanity Fair* cartoon. The other is a portrait by Signor Nerli, painted in Samoa in 1892. . . . In addition to the above there is an unfinished oil portrait, not much more than laid on in two sittings, by W. B. Richmond, R.A. This was painted about 1885–6, and is now in the possession of the artist.

In sculpture there is a somewhat greater variety :

(1) A large bronze medallion by Augustus St. Gaudens, executed in New York in 1888—a very characteristic work, representing Stevenson in bed, propped up by pillows. The face is in profile, and is considered a pretty good likeness. The medallion is now in Sir Sidney Colvin's possession.

(2) A bust done at Honolulu by Allan Hutchinson. It cannot be considered a good specimen of the sculptor's art, being but a ghastly thing and disagreeable to look on.

(3) A bust done at Sydney, believed to be by a French artist.

(4) A medallion done at Honolulu.

The last two have not been seen in this country.

In addition to the above there are a few drawings. One by J. W. Alexander appeared in 1888 in the *Century Magazine*; another was drawn by William Strang at Bournemouth, and from it an etching was executed.

There are, then, it may be said, three adequate representations of Stevenson—two portraits, one by Nerli and one by Sargent, and the St. Gaudens medallion. The Nerli portrait is apparently the better of the two former—at least Stevenson himself declared it to be the best likeness ever painted of him, and several of his friends who have seen it say that, though perhaps not altogether what may be termed a pleasant

likeness, it is probably a faithful representation of him as he appeared towards the end of his life. There are others, however, who also knew Stevenson well, who hold a contrary opinion, and say that it is not a good likeness—a diversity of opinion which, as we all know, occurs in the case of the majority of portraits that are painted. . . .

The National Portrait Gallery (London) bought in 1899 a pencil sketch of his head by Percy Spence. . . . G. W. Stevenson, sculptor, had a full-length statuette in the Scottish Academy of 1902, but it was not from the life."

Sir James Balfour Paul adds that "another Sargent (probably a replica of the first) is in the possession of Mrs. R. L. Stevenson." But this portrait, which we reproduce on page 91, is not a replica ; though it also has, perhaps, a touch of caricature about it, it is quite different from the other Sargent portrait. Instead of the statuette by G. W. Stevenson, we reproduce the bust by him that is in the Scottish Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh. Sir James mentions the painting, but not the drawing, by Count Nerli, both of which we reproduce. The original drawing is the property of Mr. H. Walter Barnett, who very kindly lent it to us for reproduction.

James Whitcomb Riley, the American poet, wrote some verses on the early portrait we reproduce on page 50, of which the following is the opening stanza :

"A face of youth mature ; a mouth of tender,
Sad, human sympathy, yet something stoic
In clasp of lips ; wide eyes of calmest splendour,
And brow serenely ample and heroic ;—
The features—all—lit with a soul ideal . . .
O visionary boy ! what were you seeing,
What hearing, as you stood thus midst the real,
Ere yet one master-work of yours had being ?"

In the later years of his life Stevenson's position had become assured ; he had an unquestionable place among the greatest and most popular authors of his day ; yet at the time of his death he was troubled with a fear that his vogue was on the wane. There were not wanting prophets among the critics who suggested that fear to him, or confirmed him in it. But among those who saw more clearly was Mr. G. K. Chesterton,

HOW TO BECOME A WRITER

By O. B.

It is becoming widely recognised that, to succeed as a writer, specialised training is essential. By "drifting" into a literary or journalistic career success may often be won it is true, but the steady increase in the number of new writers who enter the field equipped with special training is making it more and more difficult for the untrained man or woman to get a first footing. And in Journalism, the first successful step counts for more than is the case in any other profession.

The training in Free Lance Journalism and Story Writing, provided by the Practical Correspondence College, of Thanet House, Strand, is of a particularly interesting and valuable character. It is conducted entirely by correspondence, and the long and successful experience of the College has enabled it to attain a very high degree of perfection in this method of tuition. The course is personally conducted by Mr. T. Sharper Knowlson, who possesses that rare gift of imparting to others the knowledge which he himself has acquired only by long and varied experience. The training is not cut and dried—there are no dull dogmatic text-books—it is, on the contrary, adapted to the special aims and abilities of each student. Its object is to guide the beginner safely past the many rocks on which he would otherwise probably come to grief, or, at best, be greatly impeded thereby.

The student is taught how to convert his thoughts, ideas, and experiences into a saleable commodity. He is shown how to produce the kind of MSS. editors want, and how and where to submit his productions. It is quite usual for students of the College to earn, as a result of the tuition, many times the fee paid for it before the course has been completed. As the demand for capable writers shows no signs of diminishing, but is rather increasing, every would-be writer will be well advised to send for particulars of the unique training now available. Address the Secretary, Practical Correspondence College, 53, Thanet House, Strand, W.C.

and it is interesting to recall the opinion he held on the permanency of Stevenson's fame when he was reviewing Mr. Graham Balfour's biography, twelve years ago: "It is said in some quarters that Stevenson has been over-praised, that a reaction has set in against him, that he will not fascinate the next generation. It matters not one rap whether he does or not to any one who has perceived his absolute solidity and his eternal use to mankind. . . . Stevenson will win, not because he has friends or admirers or the approval of the public or the assent of the æsthetes. He will win because he is *right*—a word of great practical import which needs to be re-discovered. He may or may not be eclipsed for a time; it would be a truer way of putting it to say that the public may or may not be eclipsed for a time. . . . The idea that a great literary man who has said something novel and important to mankind can vanish suddenly and finally is ridiculous. The pessimists who believe it are people who could believe that the sun is destroyed for ever every time it sinks in the west. Nothing is lost in the magnificent economy of existence; the sun returns, the flowers return, the literary fashions return. If life is a continual parting, it is also a continual heaven of reconciliation."

But Stevenson's fame was never in danger of eclipse; a new generation has risen since he finished his work, and the interest in his books and in his personality was never stronger than it is now. In the Elegy in his "Robert Louis Stevenson and Other Poems" (John Lane), Mr. Richard Le Gallienne said the last word on this score:

> "Virgil of prose! far distant is the day
> When at the mention of your heartfelt name
> Shall shake the head, and men, oblivious, say:
> 'We know him not, this master, nor his fame.'
> Not for so swift forgetfulness you wrought,
> Day upon day, with rapt, fastidious pen,
> Turning, like precious stones, with anxious thought,
> This word and that again and yet again,
> Seeking to match its meaning with the world;
> Nor to the morning stars gave ears attent,
> That you, indeed, might ever dare to be
> With other praise than immortality
> Unworthily content.
> Not while a boy still whistles on the earth,
> Not while a single human heart beats true,
> Not while Love lasts, and Honour, and the Brave,
> Has earth a grave,
> O well-beloved, for you!"

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